

MENNONITES IN THE CITIES OF IMPERIAL RUSSIA

VOL. 2

BY
HELMUT T. HUEBERT

ALEXANDROVSK
EKATERINOSLAV
KHARKOV
MOSCOW
NIKOPOL
ODESSA
OMSK
ST PETERSBURG
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MENNONITES IN THE CITIES OF IMPERIAL RUSSIA VOLUME II

Alexandrovsk/Zaporozhye, Ekaterinoslav/Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkov, Moscow, Nikopol, Odessa, Omsk, St Petersburg, Tokmak

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PREFACE

When the Mennonites first migrated from Prussia to South Russia in 1789 to form the Chortitza Colony, then again in 1804 to establish the Molotschna Colony, they moved onto the land. They were not all originally farmers in Prussia, and for that matter they were not all good farmers in Russia, but forming closed farm villages seemed most likely to allow them to control their own destiny in the new home land.

When the two Mennonite delegates, Hoeppner and Bartsch, had negotiated for the proposed settlement, they were looking primarily for good agricultural land, but they also obtained privileges to build factories and other business enterprises both in their own villages and in the cities of Ekaterinoslav and Taurida provinces. The option of living in the city was first exercised by Heinrich Thiessen, who settled in Ekaterinoslav (now Dnepropetrovsk) in 1805, building a treadmill and a vinegar processing plant. He was followed by a number of other families, and in time a large percentage of the flour milling capacity of the city was owned by Mennonites. Mennonites moved into Berdyansk soon after it was developed into a port on the Sea of Azov in the 1830s, and continued to have a considerable presence in that city until the Communist takeover in the 1920s. In some cities Mennonites played a major role in civic administration, such as in Ekaterinoslav and Berdyansk, while in others they seem to have participated very little, such as in Millerovo.

Mennonites were eventually found in most cities of Imperial Russia - in some capacity or other. For a scholarly analysis of the phenomenon itself I refer you to an excellent article written by George Epp in 1989 as part of a volume honouring the memory of Gerhard Lohrenz. This present book, on the other hand, is meant to be a source of specific information, largely about individuals. An attempt is made to document the presence in the cities of every single Mennonite that walked the urban streets, those that could be confirmed by specific evidence. This often included people who moved to the cities for business reasons, especially to build flour mills and agricultural machinery factories - such as Millerovo, Orechov and Barvenkovo, Ekaterinoslav and Schoenwiese (later incorporated into Alexandrovsk). In the latter part of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century young people visited various universities and colleges in the cities, so they are also listed, for example ten medical students in Simferopol and six in Odessa. Some Mennonites moved to the cities to teach in various institutions, for example A H Unruh in Barvenkovo and A A Neufeld in Berdyansk. The lists even include unfortunates incarcerated in city prisons, for example Franz Teichrieb in Simferopol during the "Great Purge" of Stalin, as well as a number in Moscow, Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozhye. Not even designing the first combine in the Soviet Union protected its inventors from execution in the same purge. A considerable number have also been identified in the 1920s as those needing food vouchers, or as refugees fleeing from the Soviet Union, from lists published in the Mennonite press.

It was originally planned to include all of the major cities of Imperial Russia in one volume, but it soon became apparent that the number of Mennonites being recorded was much larger than originally contemplated; it will require a two volume set. This is the second volume.

The typical city chapter includes a brief history of the city, with its historical significance and Mennonite connections being featured, followed by maps of the city and the surrounding area and some pictures of the city itself. Then comes a complete list of every Mennonite known to have lived

or stayed in the city, including some other information such as date of birth, parents, children and major events in the life of the person. Mennonite institutions, events and businesses are listed, including pictures where available. In some instances important Mennonite events have been detailed. Brief (up to ten page) biographies of selected prominent individuals who lived in the city are part of the chapter; this writing often involved direct contact with their descendants. Sources are listed for each city chapter, but also specifically mentioned for each of the major biographies. Size of the chapters varies tremendously, that for Pologi, for example, being 12 pages, that for Berdyansk is 166 pages. There is a personal name index of those who lived in the cities at the back of the book.

I owe my thanks to the two archive centres in Winnipeg, the Centre for M B Studies and the Mennonite Heritage Centre. Conrad Stoesz, who works at both centres, has been a valuable and always cheerful helper, particularly in preparing long lists using the GRANDMA Genealogy program to ferret out hundreds of names. Many others have also been graciously forthcoming in supplying information, especially when their own forefathers were involved. Without all this help the task of this compilation would have been impossible.

I have had to be practical in some instances, although I also realize that academics will find this inexcusable. To have specifically designated footnotes in each instance from which information has been gleaned would make it much easier for researchers to check my sources, but would also have made the book a nightmare for the ordinary reader. It also would have made the book substantially thicker and heavier. I have elected to have sources listed at the end of each biography and at the end of each city chapter. Again, an additional annoyance for those interested in proper details: I have chosen to ignore periods after name initials. It is not J. B. Toews, but J B Toews. This has saved me many hours of careful detailed editorial scrutiny.

It will be noted that the people who actually lived in the city are, in the first primary reference of each city, listed in **bold** type. Other friends and relatives who did not live in the city, as important as they may be, are in ordinary type. If that person's name appears again on that same city list, it no longer merits the bold type. Some people lived in more than one city - then they deserved a **bold** designation in each city.

Not everyone will trust all the data presented in this book, and I sympathize with this point of view. I do not trust all sources either. It must be realized, however, that I could only be as accurate as the documents from which I got the information. An example of the difficulty would be one family where three sources list the same parents, same birthdays and all, but the list of children varies substantially, both in names, birth order and actually the number of children. They are all deceased, so I could not ask anyone directly!

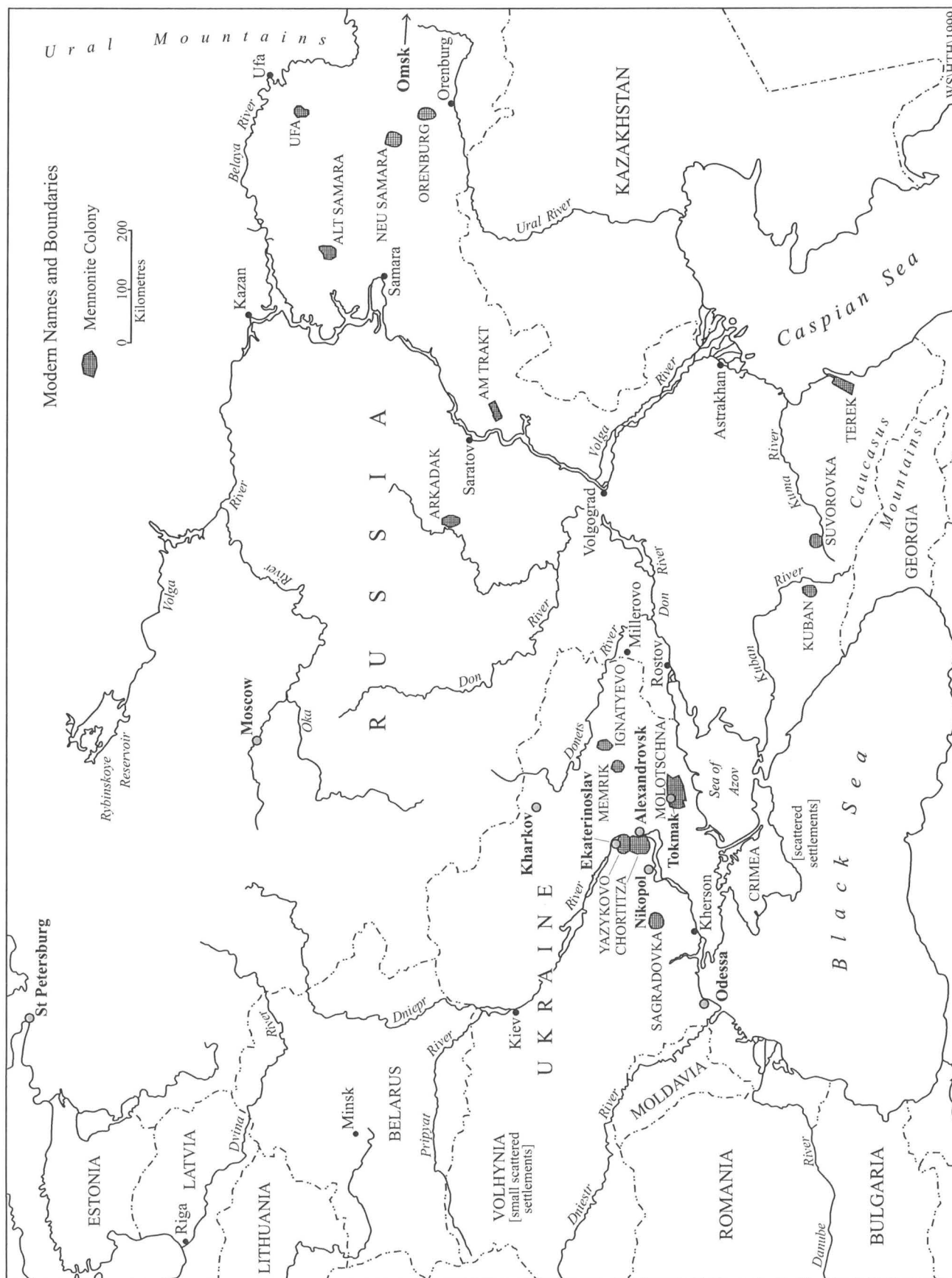
In volume I a total of 2,070 individuals were identified as living in the cities. This volume adds another 1,643, totalling 3,713. There were indeed a significant number of Mennonites living in the cities of Imperial Russia!

I sincerely trust that this book will be a valuable tool for further research into the lives of many Mennonites who lived and worked in the fascinating world of the cities of Imperial Russia.

Helmut T Huebert
March, 2008

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Cities studied in this book in **bold** type; Omsk is off the map to the right
Major Mennonite colonies included for orientation

Chapter I

ALEXANDROVSK SCHOENWIESE ZAPOROZHYE

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HISTORY OF ALEXANDROVSK (ZAPOROZHYE)

Zaporozhye is now the administrative centre of the Zaporozhye Oblast (province). The oblast measures 200 km north-to-south, and 235 km east-to-west, with an area of 27,200 sq km, constituting 4.5% of the area of Ukraine. Zaporozhye is the largest city in the oblast, with a population of over one million; there are 959 towns and villages in the oblast. Placement on the globe is from 46° 15' to 48° 08' N, and 34°10' to 37° 15' E. The climate is called “temperate continental steppe” with January winters averaging -4°C to -5° C (extreme -39° C) and summers a pleasant 22° C to 24° C (extreme 41° C). Growing season is 210-220 days in a good year.



Zaporozhye Oblast crest

The area where Zaporozhye now is located has long been settled by various people groups. The Scythians were followed by the Samatians (2nd century BC to 2nd century AD), while Slavs lived there 9th to the 13th centuries, leaving only to escape the Golden Horde invasion of the Huns. The Slavs lost an important battle in AD 1223, with the invading forces overrunning the area AD 1237-1240. By the 16th century the Zaporozhian Cossacks were masters of the area, with the fortress on Chortitza Island being the centre of their civilization.

The town of Alexandrovsk itself was founded in 1770 as one of a line of seven fortresses built to protect the southern territories of New Russia from Turkish invasion. It was on the eastern bank of the Dniepr, at the mouth of the Mokraya Moskovka River. It was named Alexandrovsk in 1785 after the commander of the first Russian Army, Prince Alexander Golitsyn. The builders were a battalion of Russian soldiers and workers who had come with their families, becoming also the first settlers in the town. As part of the strategy to occupy the lands, the government invited European colonists, including Mennonites, to establish settlements in the area. The Chortitza Colony was established just west of Alexandrovsk in 1789, and included the Island of Chortitza. The most eastern village of the colony was Schoenwiese, situated south of Alexandrovsk, just across the Moskovka River.

With epidemics and wartime hardships, the town grew very slowly. The people were engaged in raising cattle, farming and growing vegetables as well as hunting and fishing. In 1802 Alexandrovsk was included in Ekaterinoslav Province and in 1806 became a district town with some administrative offices. In 1824 the population was only 1,716 and there was one marketplace, one hotel and one tavern. In 1852 it was described as being a “primitive county capital.” In 1859 the population was 3,100 and there were 528 houses. There was some industry by 1864, but the neighbouring villages of the Chortitza Colony were economically more developed. Construction of the Lozovaya-Sevastopol Railway, connecting the Dniepr River dock at Alexandrovsk to the outside world changed that. In 1867 there were five Mennonite families living in the city, three of these establishing a monopoly in the milling industry of Alexandrovsk. In 1873 additional railway lines were built connecting the city to Melitopol, Sevastopol and Berdyansk; the port located at the mouth of the Moskovka River was enlarged. The railway attracted the first permanent Mennonite residents to the city. By 1900 there was a network of rail lines serving industry and agriculture to

the extent that Alexandrovsk became a major transportation centre. Alexandrovsk became the largest grain-marketing centre in the region.

More Mennonites were attracted to the city, with a number of mills being built. In 1895 five of the eight steam-powered mills in the city were owned by Mennonites. Other Mennonite businesses included a brick and dairy plant, a grain trading company, a grain storage facility, and a fabric factory. In 1884 the Ekaterinskaya Railway Company extended its line directly into Schoenwiese, connecting it with the neighbouring coal and iron fields. As a result Lepp & Wallmann (1886), A J Koop (1889) and Hildebrand & Pries (1892) constructed factories in the southern part of Schoenwiese, to use the convenient transportation, but also the labour available in the nearby Alexandrovsk. Together these three companies employed over 400 people and produced 500,000R of manufactured goods a year.

There was an undercurrent of revolutionary movement in Alexandrovsk during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. An attempt on the life of Czar Alexander II in Alexandrovsk failed in 1879. In a pogrom of 1 May 1881 many Jewish stores were destroyed, the rioting only stopping when government troops arrived the next morning. In 1882 there was a strike at the South Alexandrovsk Railway Station. One of the more serious uprising of workers after the Russian defeat of the 1904-1905 in the Russo-Japanese War was in Alexandrovsk 11-14 December 1905. Nestor Makhno was involved, being sentenced to death for killing a policeman. This was later reduced to a life sentence because of his youth.

Population of Alexandrovsk in 1870 was only 4,500, but this had risen to 35,000 by 1902 because of the improved transportation and larger industrial base. The Alexandrovsk/Schoenwiese complex was the main centre for the surrounding Mennonite villages. Mennonite business on the other hand also played a significant role in the development of the city. In the early twentieth century Mennonite business produced over 60% of manufactured goods, and over 50% of the flour.

On 12 June 1911 Alexandrovsk annexed Schoenwiese, largely to increase the tax base of the city. The process of amalgamation began with a motion passed by Alexandrovsk city council on 26 November 1905 calling for Schoenwiese and seven other Russian villages to be swallowed up into the metropolitan area. The city had long looked at the small thriving neighbouring Mennonite village with envy. Eventually the process was forced by a decision of the ministerial council in St Petersburg.

Mennonites played a significant role in the political life of Alexandrovsk. A considerable number, particularly the prominent industrialists, served on city council. They were also involved in various development projects, such as the new railway line from Sararov to Alexandrovsk, enlarging the Alexandrovsk harbour and building the city's grain storehouses. Mennonite business leaders contributed to various charities, supporting schools, colleges and hospitals.

During World War I Mennonite-owned factories produced military supplies and provided financial support for the families of soldiers. Also during this time the Deka Aircraft Motor Company was established in Alexandrovsk. It produced engines for the first heavy bomber in the world, designed by Igor Sikorsky of Kiev.

After the Revolution of October/November 1917 the region for some time was under the control of German-Austrian forces, April to November 1918, and also the National Ukrainian Peoples Republic. During the subsequent Civil War of 1919 to 1920 the area was overrun by various factions, including Nestor Makno. Using neighbouring Gulyaipole as a base he terrorized the region until it was taken over by the Bolsheviks, forcing him to flee to Romania in August of

1921

Mennonite enterprises declined when the Bolsheviks took over management, with nationalization occurring after the Civil War. Some of the industries, such as the three major agricultural implement manufacturing companies were amalgamated into a giant factory called "Communar," much of the personnel remaining the same. Peter Dyck, Gerhard Hamm and Kornelius Pauls continued on, with Peter Dyck the chief engineer. The team of engineers developed the first combine produced in the Soviet Union in 1929. For this they and the factory, after examination by Kalinin himself, received the Order of Lenin on 3 September 1931. Unfortunately Stalin was still Stalin, so the team members were executed in 1937 for being "enemies of the people."

After the Civil War the Oblast was established in July of 1920, with borders much the same as they are to this date. Alexandrovsk town was renamed Zaporozhye City in March 1921. Although the Civil War came to an end, drought and government induced starvation caused much suffering in the region. Mennonites in the area suffered as well. Added to this was the fear of a government opposed to Christianity as well as ownership of private property. After prolonged complicated negotiations involving the Bolshevik governments in Ukraine and Russia, the Canadian government and the Canadian Pacific Railway, it became possible for Mennonites to migrate. Early in July, 1923, the first group of 750 persons left Chortitza via the Zaporozhye railway station. This was the forerunner of the 23,000 Mennonites who were to leave for Canada from 1923 to 1928.



Mennonites migrating from Chortitza to Canada, using the Zaporozhye train station on 3 July 1923

With the New Economic Policy of the mid-1920s there was considerable economic recovery; apparently by 1925 many factories had regained the output they had achieved in 1913. Construction of the major hydro-electric dam, Dneproges, across the Dniepr River, 1927-1932, not only controlled the rapids in the river, but was a stimulus to industry. The first delivery of commercial current was recorded on 1 May 1932. The dam created an upstream lake which contained 300,000,000 cubic metres of water; the previous rapids were now 37 metres below the surface.

After the German invasion of Russia on 22 June 1941, the Soviets spared nothing to dismantle 48 of the big factories in Zaporozhye, evacuating them beyond the Ural Mountains. German tanks reached Chortitza Island by 18 August, and started shelling the Dneproges Dam. The defenders had dynamited the machine hall and the main part of the dam; the resulting wave disrupted German transportation, but also drowned many soldiers of the Red Army as well as civilians. The city finally fell on 4 October. The new regime introduced compulsory labour conscription for all between 15 and 55 years of age. The occupation was fairly orderly, with schools, theatres, and newspapers continuing to function. Much of the industry had been moved eastward or was destroyed, but the Germans were able to restore an aluminum plant, where 10-15 Mennonites were employed during the occupation. There was of course cruelty as well, with 43,000 inhabitants losing

their lives, 3,700 on 24 March 1942 alone. In total 157,506 young people from the region were deported to labour camps in Germany. Adolf Hitler and Hermann Goering visited the city on 8

September 1943. The Red Army started pushing back the Germans from the region by 14 September 1943, but the last German occupation troops were not dislodged until 8 February 1944.

Zaporozhye played a role in Communist political developments. Leonid Illich Brezhnev, on his way up the chain of command in the party, worked in Ukraine 1946 to 1950 as first secretary of the Zaporozhye and Dnepropetrovsk regional committees of the communist party. He eventually reached the highest position in the land in the 1970s. His office and desk are now regarded as museum pieces in Zaporozhye.



The office of L I Brezhnev in Zaporozhye

Present day Zaporozhye is a city of over 1,000,000 people. It produces stainless steel, ball-bearing steel and cold-rolled steel sheets. The Zaporozhye Aluminium Plant which employed Mennonites in the 1940s is still in operation. There are over 100 secondary schools, 14 professional schools, a university and about 30 scientific research and design institutions. The city limits have expanded to include the eastern villages of the Chortitza Colony. The tram, trolley-bus and motor bus routes total over 1,000 km; there are 30 parks and public gardens. There is also a museum in Zaporozhye which displays a model of the combine designed by Dyck, Hamm and colleagues.

When the Mennonites first arrived in the vicinity of Alexandrovsk in 1789, they took shelter under the Old Oak Tree. This tree has suffered greatly in the last few years, and is likely “on its last legs,” although valiant attempts are being made to save it.

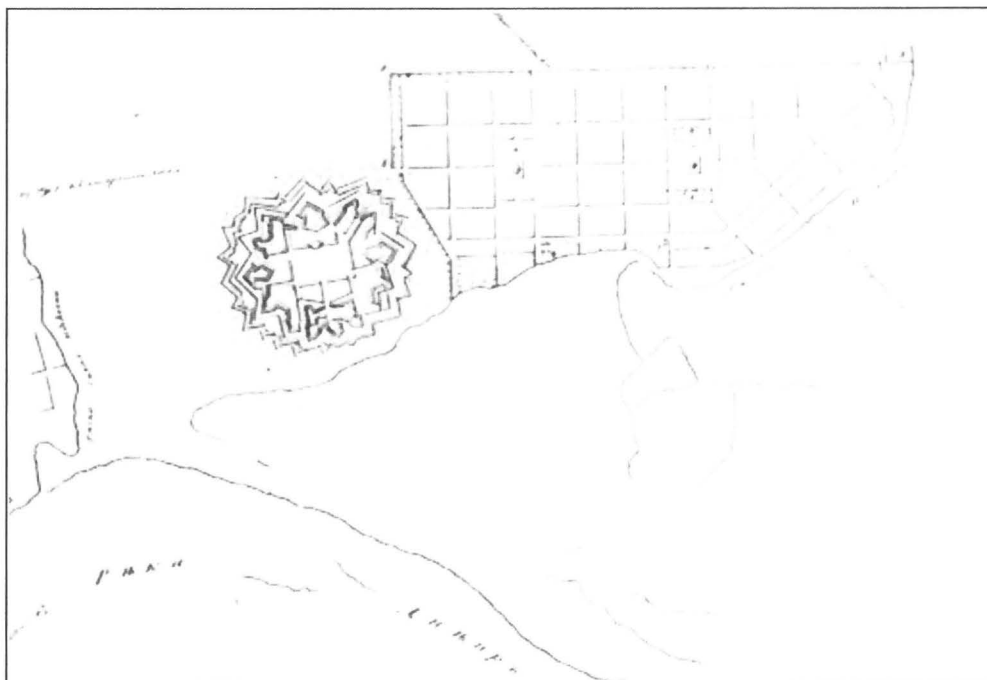
Currently there is a small Mennonite congregation in Zaporozhye. The Mennonite Heritage Cruise boats anchor in the harbour, disgorging hundreds of visitors every year, who search out their roots in the surrounding countryside.



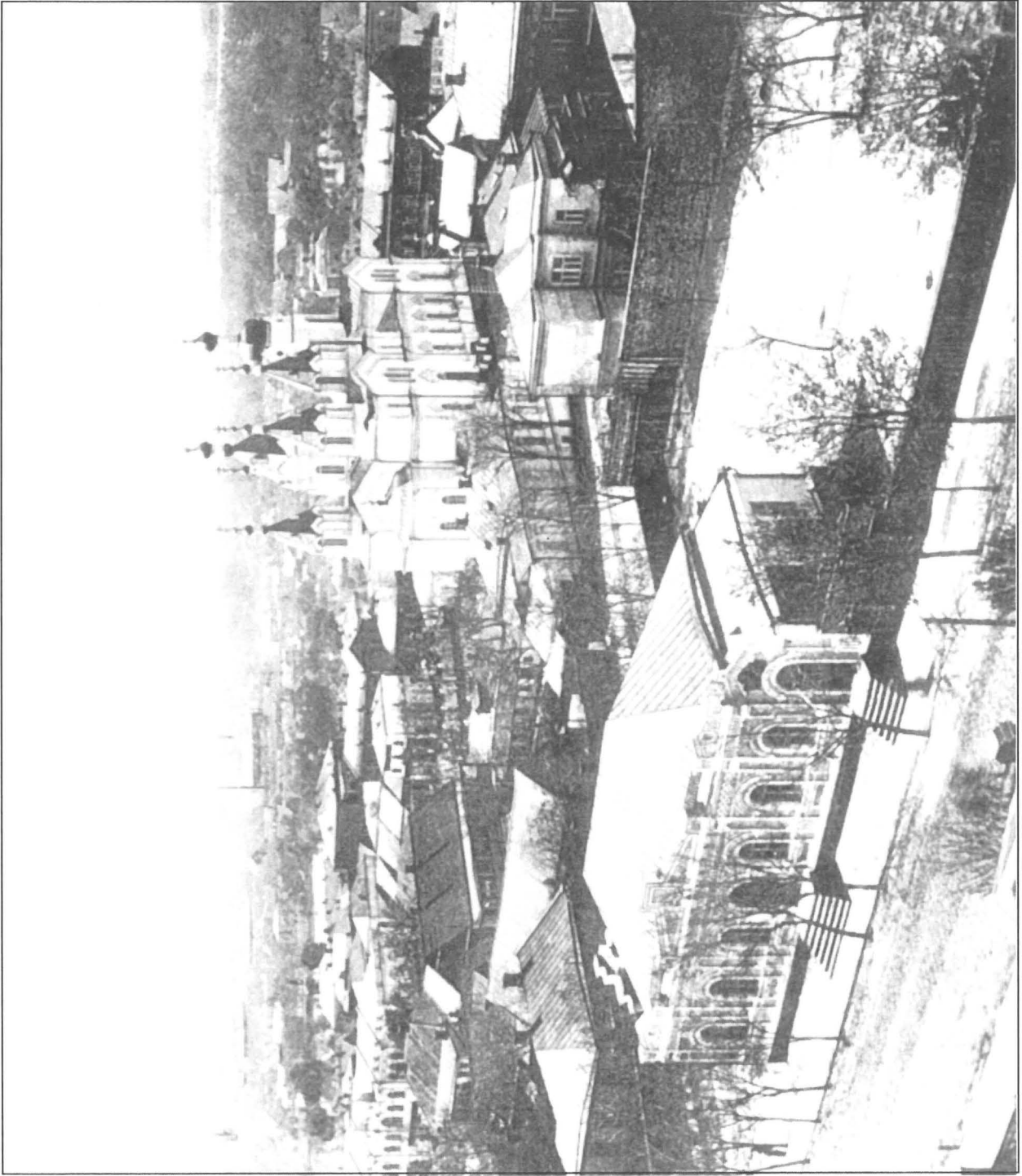
The Old (Patriarch) Oak Tree undergoing “treatment”



“The Old Oak” in better times. It was said to be 500 years old when the first Chortitza settlers camped under its branches in 1789

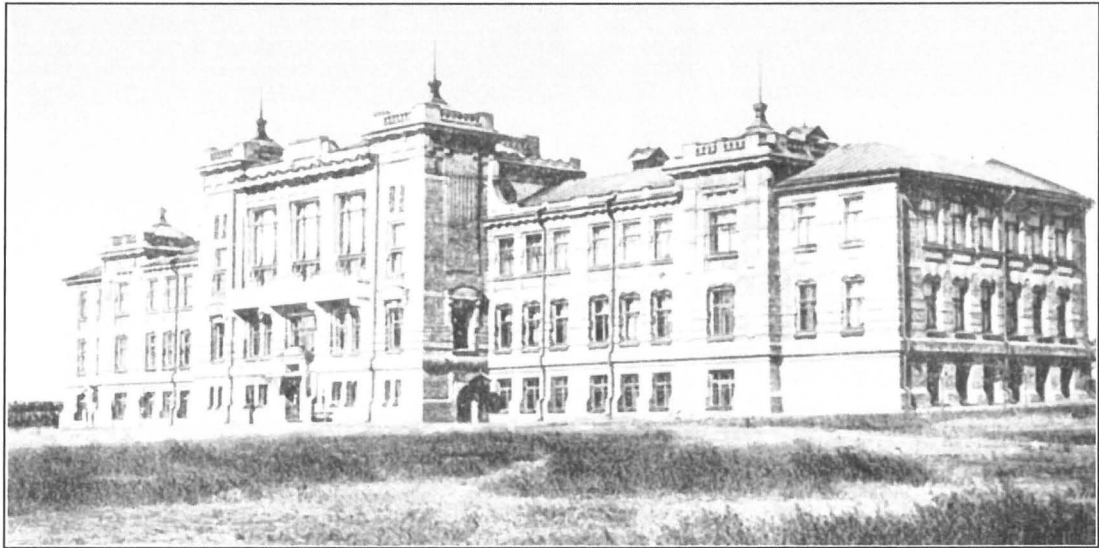


Plan of Alexandrovsk Fortress and town, 1770

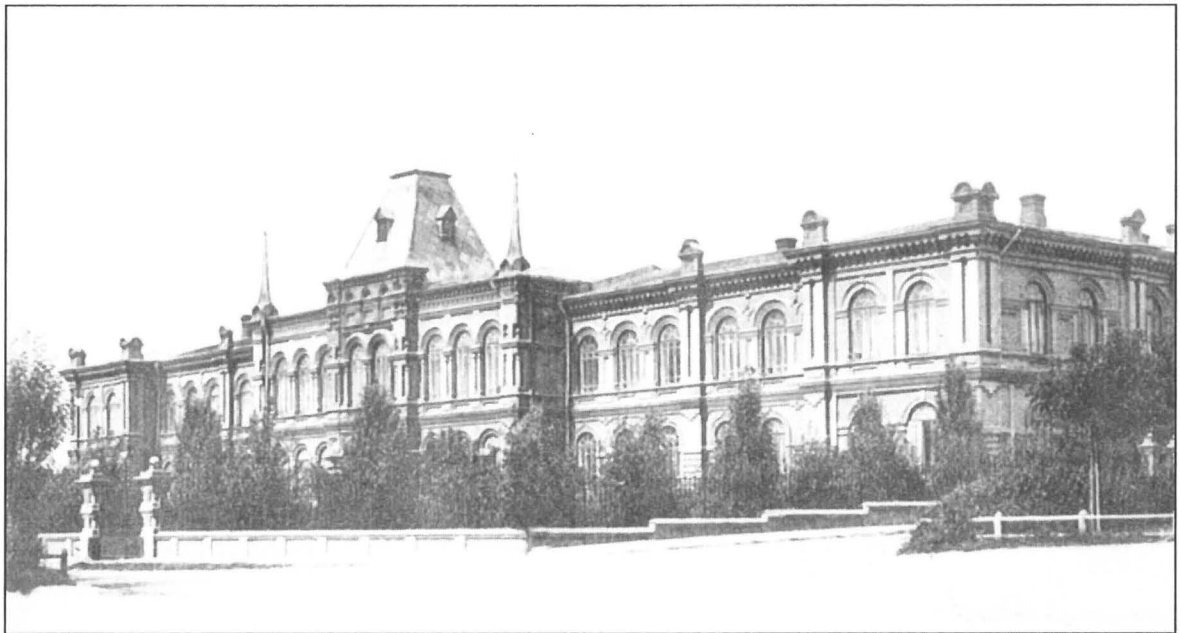


Town centre and Pokrovsky Cathedral in the early twentieth century

Some of the Alexandrovsk institutions toward which
Mennonite philanthropists contributed



Alexandrovsk Commercial College, 1901



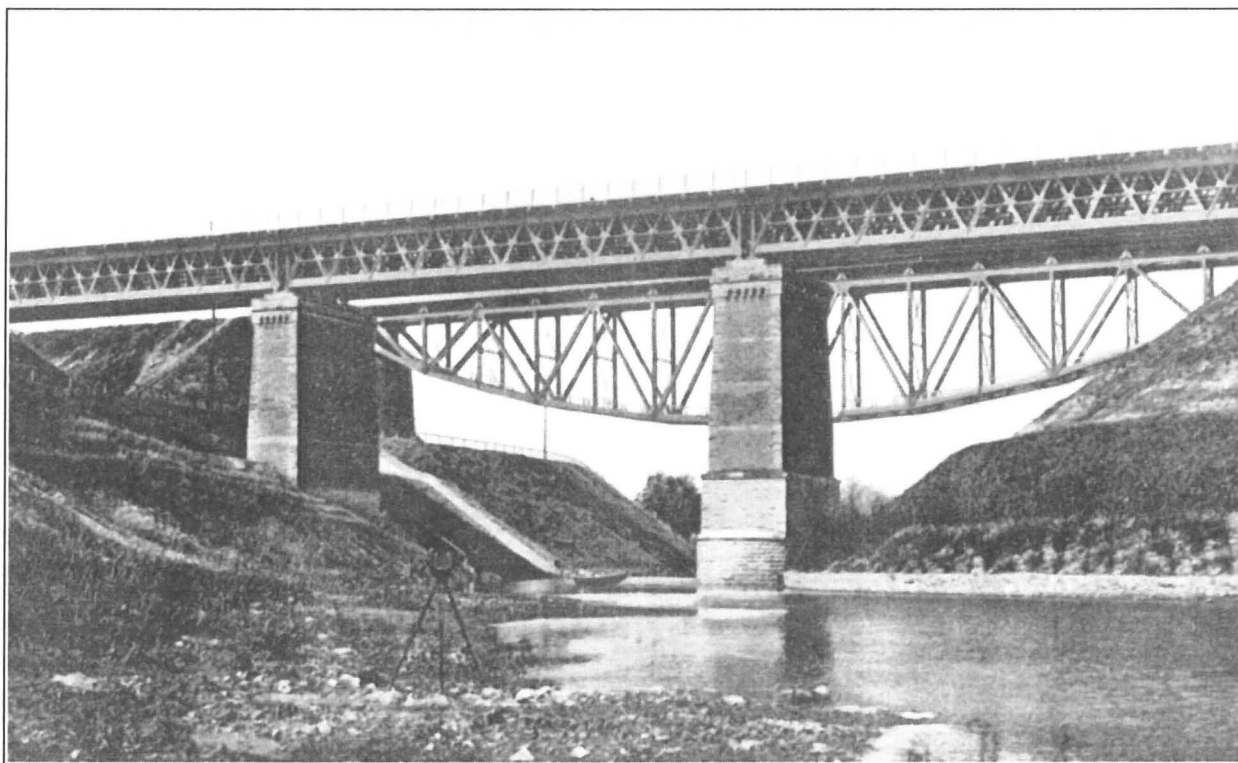
Alexandrovsk Women's Classical School in 1903



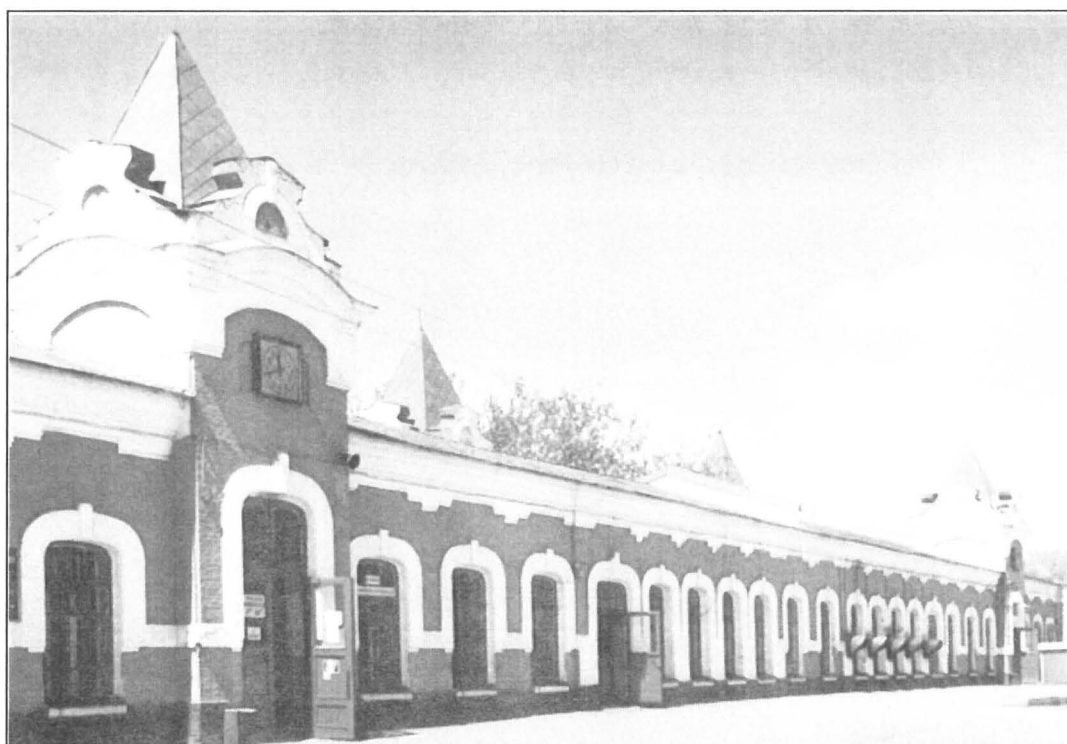
Grand Moscow Hotel, Alexandrovsk, 1910



Alexandrovsk river port, early twentieth century



Alexandrovsk Railway Bridge across the Moskva River built in 1870



Katherine II Railway Station in Alexandrovsk, built in 1902



Alexandrovsk business in 1910



Alexandrovsk street in 1910

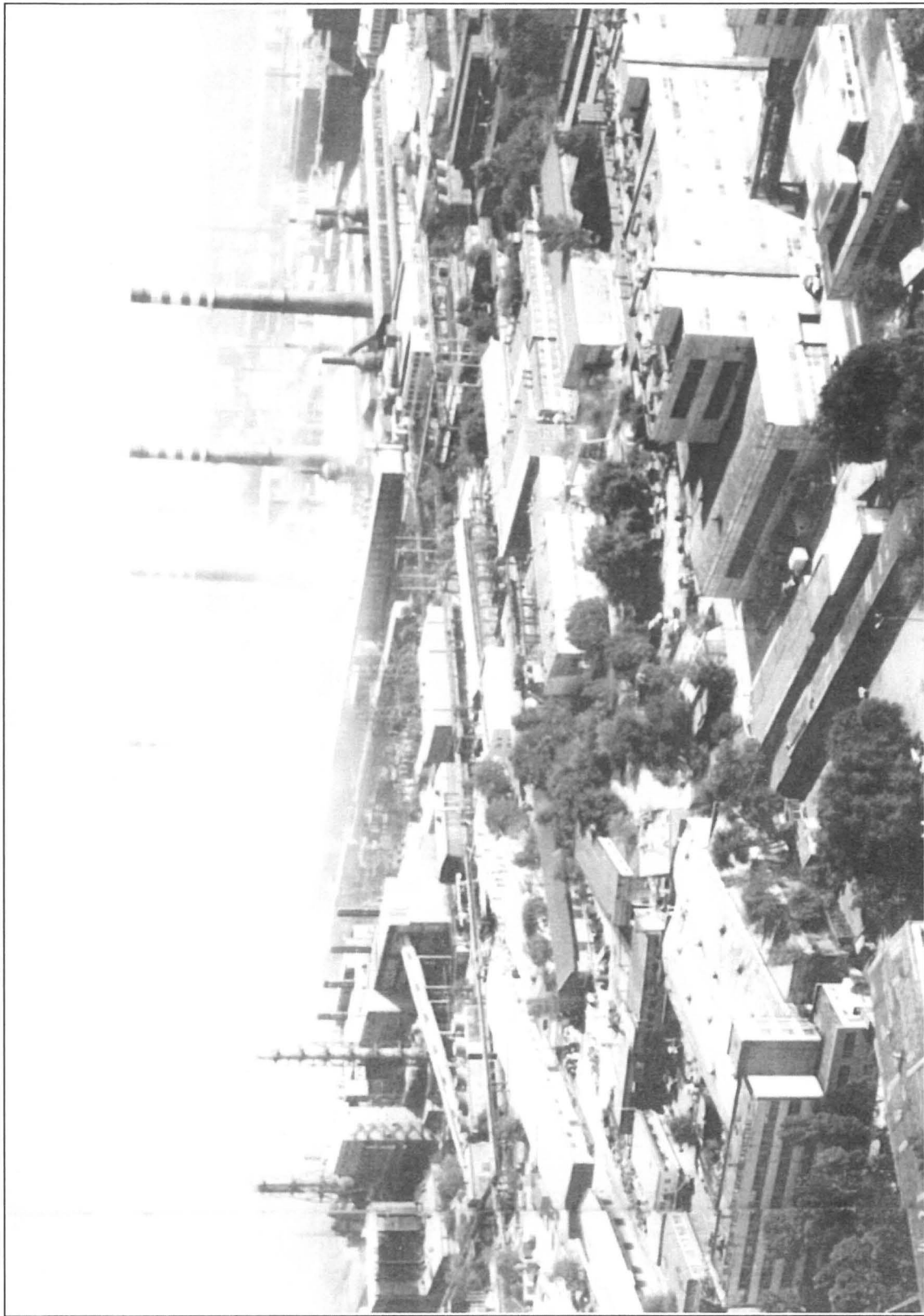
The Baer Clinic was frequently used by Mennonites



Former Heinrich Baer Medical Clinic built in 1912



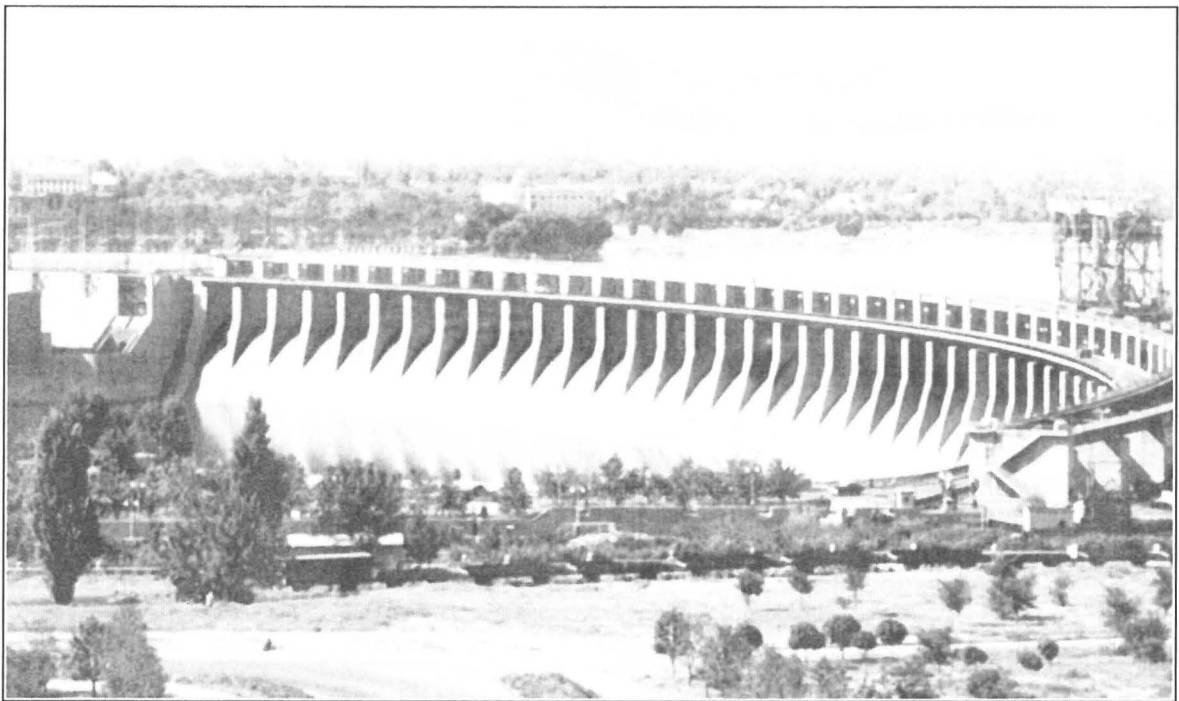
Zemstvo (government) House, Alexandrovsk, built 1913-1915



Metallurgical industrial sector of Zaporozhye



Construction of the Dneproges Dam across the Dniepr River at Zaporozhye 1927-1932



Dneproges Dam



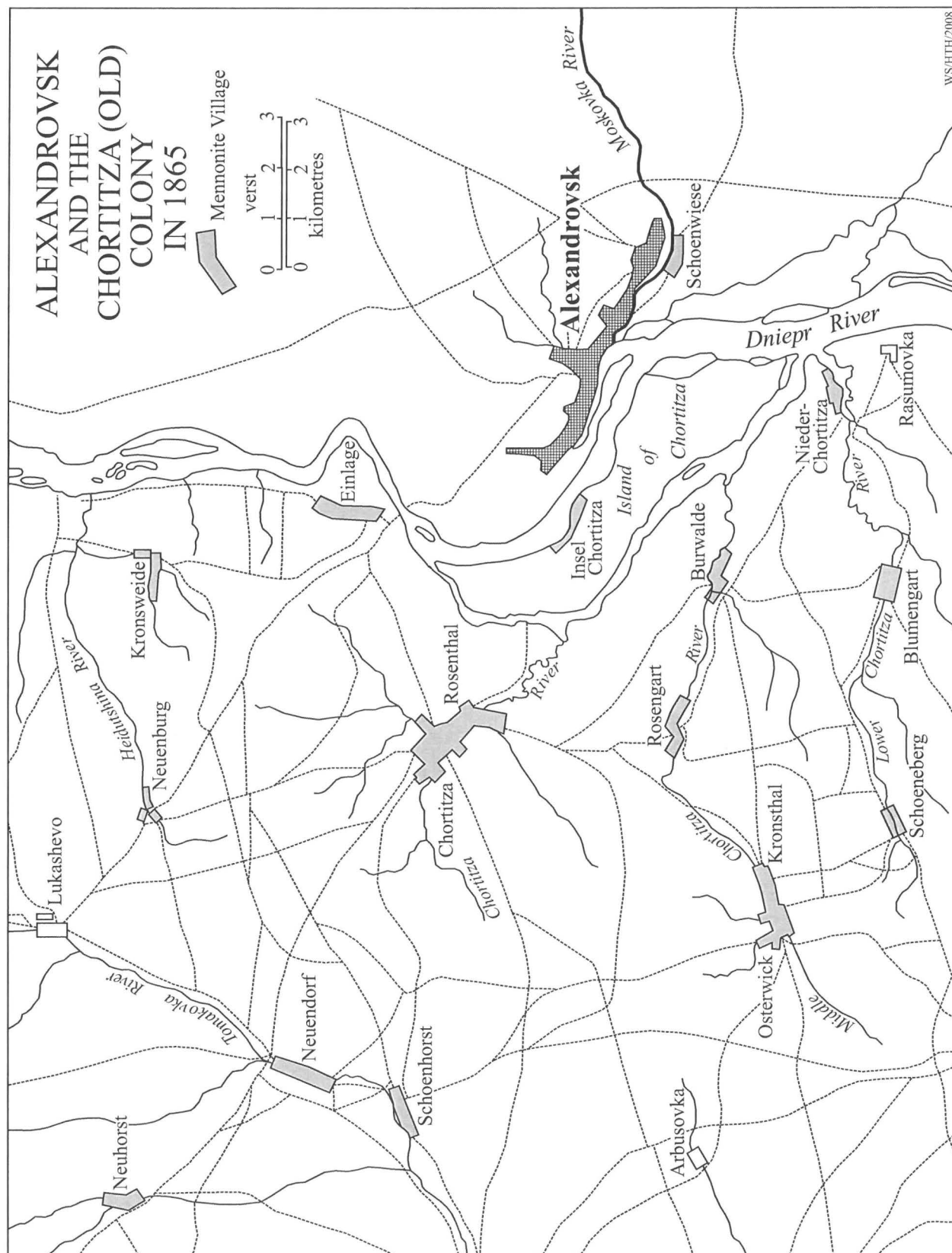
German attack on Zaporozhye 1941

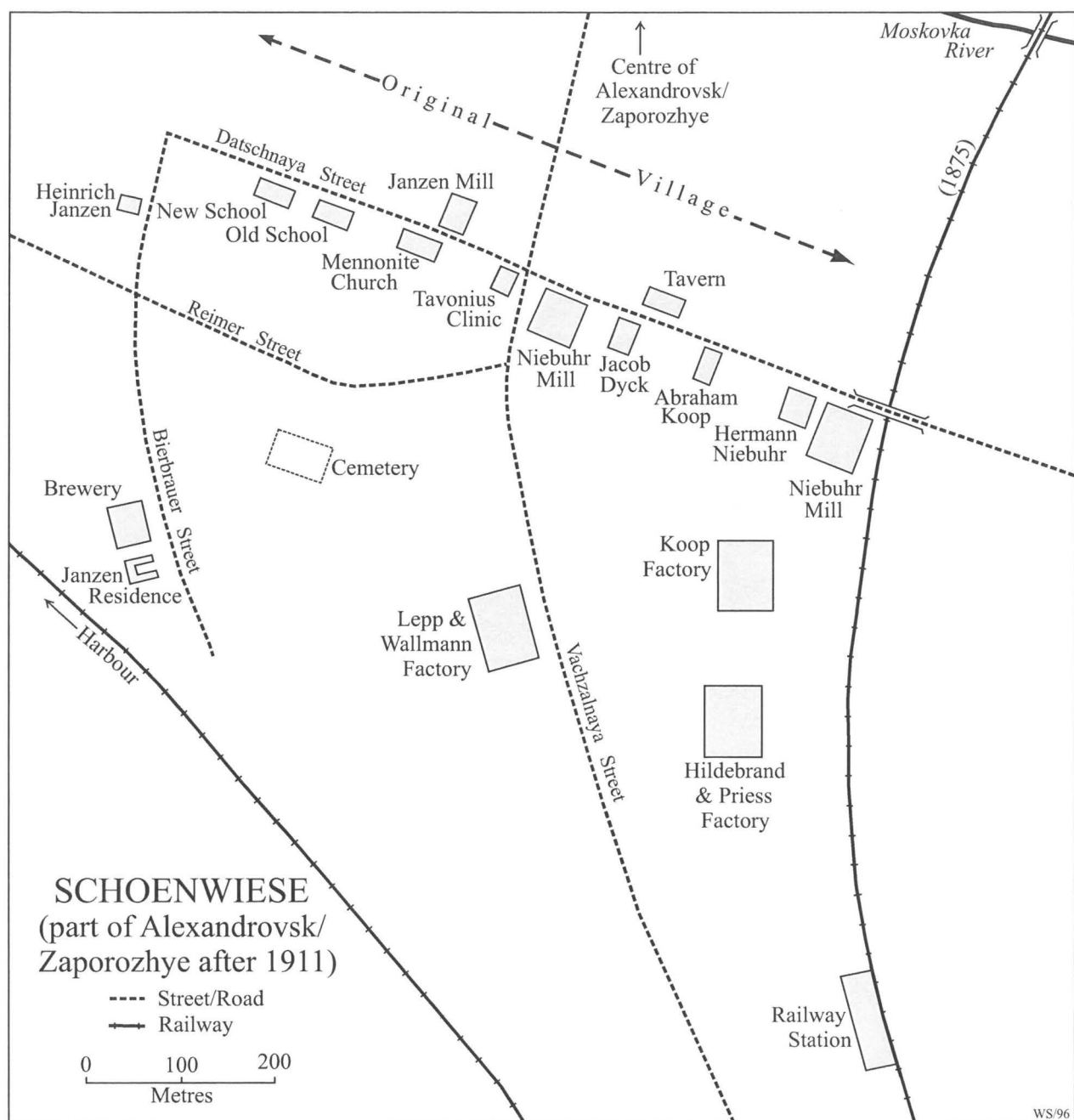


Russian counter-attack near Chortitza in 1944

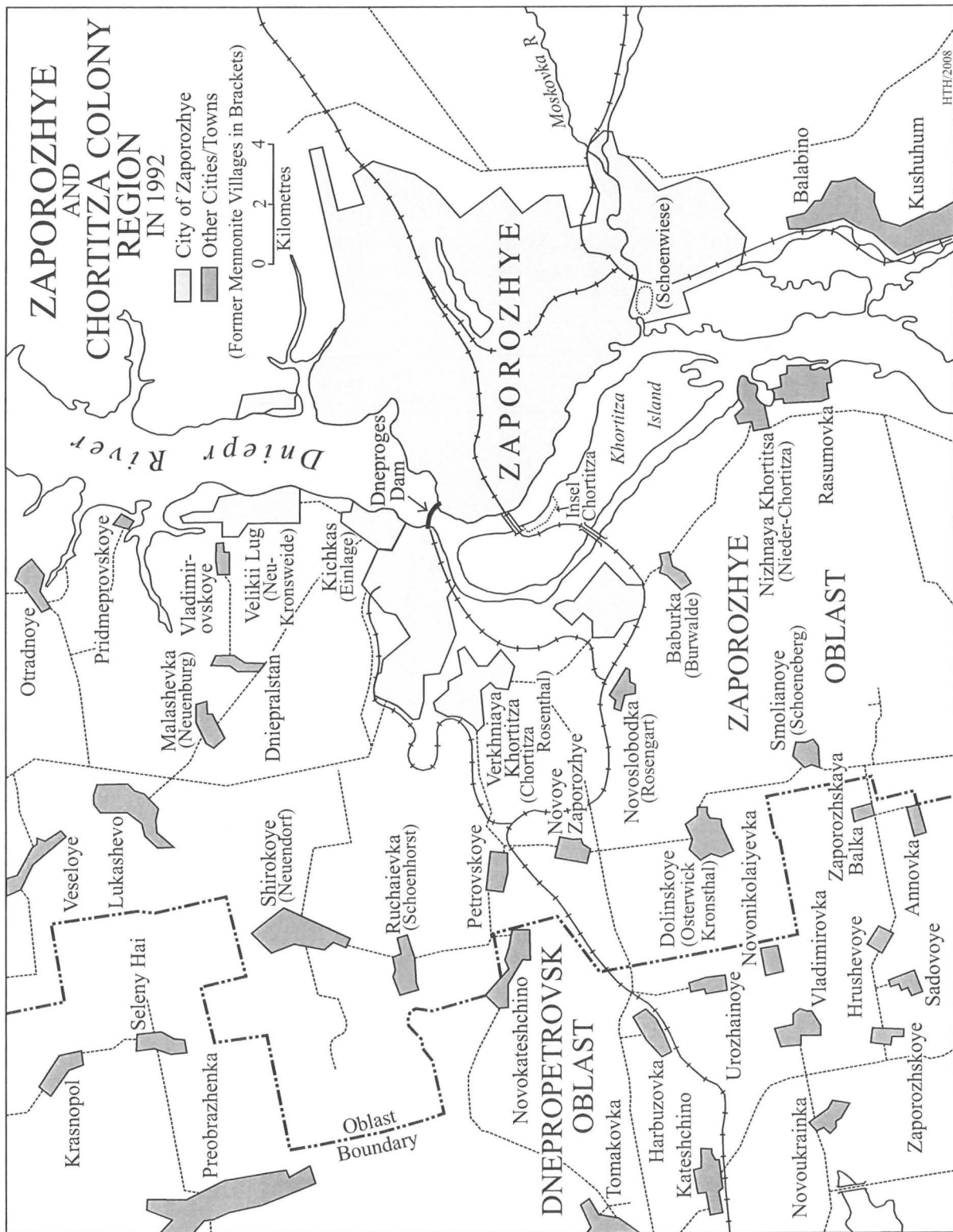


Reconstruction Dneproges Dam, mostly by women, 1944-1945





Schoenwiese was one of the villages of the Chortitza (Old) Colony. Eight villages were established in 1790, then another two, including Schoenwiese, in 1797. The original 17 families settled all in a row south of the Moskovka River. Alexandrovsk, at that time as small Russian town/fortress, was just north of the river. The settlers were engaged in agriculture and raising sheep. With the advantage of rail connections and the nearby Dniepr River, industry soon centred in Schoenwiese. Industrialists who first started in Chortitza built branch factories in Schoenwiese. In the 1850s and 1860s there were a dozen mills, Peter Bock being the widely recognized builder. The milling industry and the manufacture of agricultural machinery flourished, with large establishments located in Schoenwiese. The Schoenwiese Mennonite Church was a branch of the Frisian Krongarten congregation. Leading ministers were Andreas Vogt and Johann Klassen. Kornelius Huebert was village teacher for twenty years. In June 1911 Schoenwiese was incorporated into the city of Alexandrovsk, by special decree of the ministerial council in St Petersburg. Many of the Mennonite institutions remained intact. During the Revolution and Civil War the whole city suffered. Many Mennonites migrated to Canada in the 1920s, a considerable number settling in Winnipeg, to found the Schoenwieser Mennonite Church.



LIST OF PEOPLE

(People who at one time lived in Alexandrovsk)
(Since Schoenwiese was annexed by Alexandrovsk in 1911, this list
also mentions people who it was thought lived there after 1911)
(Each name will appear in **bold** print only once)

We have been able to identify at least 437 Mennonites who spent some time of their life in Alexandrovsk/Zaporozhye, and in Schoenwiese after 1911 (which would then make it part of the city). The list is undoubtedly incomplete, since it was difficult in many instances to be certain whether the people lived in Chortitza or in Schoenwiese. They seem to have moved back and forth, or even lived in both places.

Bartel, Jakob

Among the first to settle in Alexandrovsk, 1809

Remained resident until only 1816, not mentioned thereafter

Bock, Gerhard

Born about 1825 in Schoenwiese

Married Margaretha, who was born about 1832

Had 3 children who all were born and lived in Schoenwiese

1. **Margaretha** - born 24 November 1851 in Schoenwiese, died 1 September 1927

2. **Gerhard** - born 24 November 1853 in Schoenwiese

Owner of a stonemasons and carpenter shop in Alexandrovsk in the 1870s

Married **Helena Goerzen**. They had 5 children, all likely born in Schoenwiese:

Helena (1876), **Margaretha** (1878), **Gerhard** (1880), **Jakob** (1883), and

Aganetha (1887)

3. **Peter** - born about 1857 in Schoenwiese

De Veer, Katharina Nikolai

Born 10 November 1873 in Schoenwiese

Parents Nikolai (Klaas) Dyck and Maria Falk; sister of Abraham Nikolai Dyck

Married Jakob De Veer 26 January 1897

He was born 1 November 1871, parents Dietrich De Veer and Anna Giesbrecht

They first lived in Neu Chortitza, Schlachtin Colony until about 1911, then Schumanovka,

Barnaul Colony

First 9 children born in Neu Chortitza, the last 2 in Schumanovka

Katharina died 17 April 1922, Jakob died 26 April 1922, both in Schumanovka

De Veer, Margaretha Nikolai

Born 21 October 1869 in Schoenwiese

Parents Nikolai (Klaas) Dyck and Maria Falk; sister of Abraham Nikolai Dyck

Married Bernhard De Veer 10 July 1888

He was born 10 November 1865, parents Dietrich De Veer and Anna Giesbrecht

They first lived in Neu Chortitza, Schlachtin Colony until 1901, then in Alexeifeld

First 8 children born in Neu Chortitza, the last 6 in Alexeifeld

Most of family possibly to Canada about 1930

Bernhard died in 1931

Margaretha died 31 December 1940 in British Columbia

Dyck, Abraham Jacob

Born 13 June 1869 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Parents Jacob Dyck and Katharina Niebuhr

Married **Susanna Toews** 10 June 1900

She was born 8 April 1876 in Ekaterinovka, Ignatyev Colony, parents Johann Toews and Susanna Neufeld

Child: **Katharina** born 12 March 1901 in Schoenwiese, she married Franz P Thiessen 18 September 1921 in Schoenwiese. Franz was born in Chortitza, Chortitza

Children: Irmgard - born 2 June 1925 in Neuendorf, Chortitza

Alice - born 4 September 1932 in Rosthern, Saskatchewan

Susanna died 4 October 1914 in Schoenwiese

Married **Helena Thiessen** 11 April 1916

She was born 11 September 1884 in Chortitza, Chortitza, parents Peter Thiessen and Helena Thiessen

Child: **Helena Elfrieda** born 28 October 1918 in Schoenwiese, she married Victor Klassen on 19 July 1942 in Rosthern, Saskatchewan

Victor was born 13 September 1912 in Schoenwiese, parents Johann P Klassen and Katharina Dyck

To Canada, where children Dolores, John and Kathleen were born. Victor served in the RCAF, he died 26 February 1998 in Vancouver, BC

Abraham Dyck was on city council of Alexandrovsk 1907-1912

He was very busy, so he missed many of the meetings. He was reprimanded for this Part owner of H A Niebuhr and Co. In 1907 the Dycks owned 284 of the 1,994 shares, in 1914 it was 270 of the 1,742 shares

Abraham died 22 December 1919 in Schoenwiese

Helena died 29 August 1958 in Vancouver, BC

Dyck, Abraham Nikolai

Born 30 March 1861 in Schoenwiese

Parents Nikolai (Klaas) Dyck and Maria Falk

Married **Elisabeth Brand**

She was born 18 May 1875

One daughter **Luise**, born 16 October 1898 in Schoenwiese

Abraham worked as foreman in the forge division of Lepp & Wallmann in Schoenwiese

After the Revolution, when the factory was nationalized, and was run by a Workers'

Council, many key men were dismissed, but Abraham was well liked, and remained on the job

Abraham died 4 May 1944 in Einlage, Chortitza

Dyck, Helena

Born 27 October 1921

Parents Jakob and Helena Dyck

Grand daughter of teacher Peter P Neufeld

Later married a Mr Friesen

Worked in an Aluminium Factory in Zaporozhye October 1941 until September 1943
during the German occupation, worked in the office

Lived in rented quarters during the week, then home to Chortitza for the week-ends

The factory was on the eastern bank of the Dniepr River

It was destroyed by the retreating Russians, then rebuilt by the Germans

About 10-15 Mennonites worked in the plant, some in the office, others as translators

Helena Dyck, Katharina Langemann and Katharina Funk in the office, Maria Sudermann,
Peter Harder and Helene Neufeld as translators

The Aluminium Factory is still in operation (2008)

Dyck, Jacob

Born 18 December 1837 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Married Katharina Niebuhr 23 September 1862 in Schoenwiese

She was the sister of Hermann Niebuhr

Hermann and Jacob formed the Niebuhr milling company

The family moved from Chortitza to Schoenwiese 30 May 1886

He originally started with a windmill in the back of his place

Children:

1. Jacob - born 24 July 1863, died 23 September 1865, in Chortitza

2. Abraham - born 16 May 1865, died 6 August 1868 in Chortitza

3. Jacob - born 24 May 1867, died 14 August 1868 in Chortitza

4. Abraham - born 13 June 1869 in Chortitza

(see separate listing Abraham Jacob Dyck)

5. Sara - born 1 October 1871, died 22 January in Chortitza

6. Jacob Jacob - born 20 November 1873 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Married Katharina Janzen 23 January 1900

(see separate listing Katharina Janzen)

7. Katharina - born 8 December 1875 in Chortitza, Chortitza, married Heinrich

Cornelius Huebert (see separate listing Heinrich Cornelius Huebert)

8. Hermann - born 9 April 1878, died 25 February 1879 in Chortitza, Chortitza

9. Justina - born 17 January 1880, married Jakob Jakob Wiebe

(see separate listing Jakob Jakob Wiebe)

10. Sara - born 13 July 1882, died 5 January 1889 in Schoenwiese

11. **Hermann** - born 23 August 1885, married, then married again, **Paulina Kuehn**
on 6 November 1912

Children: **Heinrich**

Gerald - born 28 October 1913 in Schoenwiese

Harry - born 28 October 1913 in Schoenwiese (twin), exiled,
died 21 February 1937

Hermann died 29 March 1921 in Schoenwiese

12. **Wilhelm** - born 7 February 1890 in Schoenwiese, married Paulina Kuehn

11 December 1922, Paulina died 23 August 1932 in Zaporozhye,

Wilhelm was exiled and died 10 September 1943

Dyck, Jacob Jacob

Born 13 February 1873 in Osterwick, Chortitza

Married **Susanna Dyck** in 1903; she was born about 1870

Jacob worked for a Niebuhr mill for awhile, was a great gardener, grew apricots

Children:

1. **Johann** - moved to Burwalde, wife but no children, died "tragically"
2. **Susanna** - born 24 November 1904, studied in a business school, and worked in nursing home in Muntau, Molotschna, married Alexander Venichenko from Odessa, 2 children, to Germany in 1943, to Canada in 1948
3. **Jacob** - born 18 November 1906, moved to Borissovo after the death of his parents, married a Russian woman, he died a "tragic" death
4. **Dietrich** - born 7 November 1915 in Schoenwiese, to Canada, educated in agriculture. worked for ministry of Agriculture in Ottawa, married, 2 children

Dyck, Nikolaus

Owner of a blacksmith shop in Alexandrovsk in the 1870s

Dyck, Peter Johann

(see brief biography)

Born 3 June 1884 in Osterwick, Chortitza Colony

Parents Johann Dyck and Anna Niebuhr, both born in Kronstal

His father was a farmer, as well as a wagon builder

Peter was a tall man, almost seven feet

His father sent him to Germany to study in a technical institute in Zwickau, Saxony

Finished about 1910, worked another year in Germany to get experience, then back to

Ukraine about 1911

Married **Elsbeth Wilhelm** in Germany in 1912

Children:

1. **Herbert** - born 31 July 1913 in Schoenwiese
2. **Margaretha** - born 1915, died about 1916
3. **Peter** - born 1918 in Schoenwiese, left Zaporozhye when his parents were imprisoned in 1937, went to Siberia, and settled 500 km E of Lake Baikal, first in contact with siblings in 1965, married to a Russian woman, no children
4. **Walter** - born 4 January 1924 in Schoenwiese, married a Russian woman, lived in Cheliabinsk, 2 children
5. **Hildegard** - born 25 September 1926 in Schoenwiese, migrated to Canada in 1948 with the Venichenko family, married Heinrich Epp 31 July 1954 in Winnipeg, Canada, he worked for the CBC, 4 children, Heinrich died 19 July 2000, Hildegard lives in Winnipeg (February 2008)

Worked as engineer for the A J Koop Factory in Schoenwiese

Peter continued on with the factory when it was taken over by the Communist government and renamed Factory "Kommunar." He was the chief engineer.

Together with others recipient of the Order of Lenin in 1931 for designing and producing the first combine in the Soviet Union

Arrested 8 April 1937, and executed 17 September 1937

Enns, Jacob

Born 26 July 1852 in Nieder-Chortitza

Married **Anna Goertzen** 25 June 1877 in Schoenwiese, Chortitza

Her parents were Dietrich Goertzen and Helena Penner

Children:

1. Jacob - born 4 December 1878, died 15 July 1888
2. **Peter** - born 15 October 1880, died 24 February 1911 in Schoenwiese
3. Dietrich - born 24 December 1882, died 8 March 1902 in Schoenwiese
4. Johann - born 5 May 1885, died 13 April 1886
5. **Aganetha** - born 28 January 1887 in Schoenwiese, married a Mr Friesen, then married Christopher Lehn 27 January 1913
Children: Anna (1913), Gregory (1915), Aganetha (1918) born in Rosenthal
Married Jacob H Pauls
Children: Frieda (1921), Frieda (1923)
6. Anna - born 15 August 1889, died March 1890
7. Anna - born 21 August 1891, died October 1893
8. **Jacob** - born 30 March 1894, died 4 April 1919 in Schoenwiese
9. Isaak - born 25 October 1896 in Schoenwiese, died 26 November 1896 in Schoenwiese
10. **Isaak** - born 14 January 1899 in Schoenwiese, married Helena Schroeder 10 June 1923 in Rosenthal, Chortitza
Children: Lena (born 1924 in Rosenthal), Anna (born 1925 in Rosenthal)
Walter (born 1931 in Altona, Manitoba), Paul (born 1937 in Morris, Manitoba)

The family therefore first lived in Rosenthal, then migrated to Manitoba before 1931. Isaak died of TB 9 April 1947 in Morris, Manitoba

Father Jacob died 27 May 1904 in Schoenwiese, his wife Anna migrated to Manitoba, likely with her children, and died 31 December 1943 in Morris, Manitoba

Epp, Anna Franz

Born 12 February 1887, on the Schoenberg (Wiens) Estate, also called Schoeneberg

Parents Franz Franz Wiens and Margaretha Wiens

Father died, and the widow married Jakob H Thiessen; the couple had 5 children

Married Kornelius Kornelius Epp 25 February 1910; at least for some time they lived on the Schoenberg Estate

4 children

Husband Kornelius killed by Makhno bandits January or February 1919

Anna died 12 September 1920 in Schoenwiese

Fast, Johann J

Member of the Regional Assembly of Alexandrovsk (Uyesdnaya Uprava)

Funk, Katharina

Worked in an Aluminium Factory in Zaporozhye October 1941 until September 1943 during the German occupation, worked in the office

Lived in rented quarters during the week, then home to Chortitza for the weekends

The aluminium plant was on the eastern bank of the Dniepr River

It was destroyed by the retreating Russians, then rebuilt by the Germans
About 10-15 Mennonites worked in the plant, some in the office, others as translators
Goerzen, Dietrich Dietrich
Born 24 June 1863 in Schoenwiese, Chorititza
Married **Maria Nikolai Dyck** 5 February 1889 in Schoenwiese
Her parents Nikolai Dyck and Maria Falk; she was sister of Abraham Nikolai Dyck
Children: 10 children, all born in Schoenwiese

1. **Nikolai** - born 6 November 1889, married Lena Fast 1 October 1925, banished 15 December 1937, Lena sent into exile 30 September 1941, died there
2. **Abraham** - born 13 October 1891, died 12 December 1917 in Schoenwiese
3. **Maria** - born 4 September 1893, married Rudolf Peter Kerber 18 August 1919 in Chortitza, migrated to Saskatchewan, died 1978 in Saskatoon
4. **Anna** - born 25 July 1895, never married, died 2 July 1918 in Schoenwiese
5. **Dietrich** - born 30 September 1896, died 7 May 1900 in Schoenwiese
6. **Jakob** - born 6 June 1899, died 10 December 1899 in Schoenwiese
7. **Kornelius** - born 6 June 1899 (twin), died 16 June 1931 in Schoenwiese
8. **Dietrich** - born 8 March 1901, married, lived in Sumy in 1926, Stalingrad in 1941, Ural district in 1942, died 16 April 1960 in Sverdlovsk, USSR
9. **Margaretha** - born 5 March 1904, died 8 March 1905
10. **Margaretha** - born 21 March 1907, married Abraham Niebuhr 1 February 1931, (see note on Abraham Niehuhr)

Hamm, Gerhard Christian

(see brief biography)

Born 22 April 1883 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Parents Christian Hamm and Maria M Hamm (second cousins)

Married **Katharina (Kaethe) Rempel**

Children:

1. **Christian Gerhard** - born 16 February 1916, disappeared in 1938
2. **Katharina** - born 1918, died 1920

Wife Katharina died in 1920

Married Anna Koop 9 July 1923

She was born 14 August 1892 in Chortitza, Chortitza, parents Peter A Koop and Anna K Loewen

Children:

3. **Marguerite (Gretel)** - born 6 September 1926 in Zaporozhye, into state orphanage when father and mother were arrested in 1937, to Germany, then to Canada in 1948, married Wilhelm Bergmann

Design engineer at the Kommunar Factory

Together with others recipient of the Order of Lenin in 1931 for designing and producing the first combine in the Soviet Union

Arrested 8 April 1937, and executed 17 September 1937

Wife Anna also arrested, exiled for 5 years, Gulag for another 10 years, finally allowed to leave, joining her daughter in Winnipeg in 1962. Died 15 July 1978 in Winnipeg

Hamm, Jacob

Born 14 July 1855 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Baptized 2 June 1875 in Chortitza

Married **Sara Derksen** 18 February 1879 in Chortitza; she was born 26 March 1859 in Chortitza

Her parents were Peter Derksen and Anna Klassen

He owned a mill somewhere near Alexandrovsk, also was a real estate dealer, and owned a movie theatre in Chortitza

The family likely first lived in Chortitza, then by 1892 in Schoenwiese, remaining there until at least 1903, probably longer

Children:

1. Peter - born 1 March 1880 in Chortitza, Chortitza, died 18 April in Chortitza
2. Anna - born 28 January 1881 in Chortitza, Chortitza, died 9 March 1881 in Chortitza
3. Jacob - born 9 September 1882 in Chortitza, Chortitza, died 2 December 1883 in Chortitza
4. **Jacob** - born 10 August 1885, died 27 January 1920 in Franzfeld, Yazykovo
5. **Anna** - born 7 April 1888, married Franz Giesbrecht, died about 1934 in Franzfeld, Yazykovo
6. **Peter** - born 3 May 1890, died 20 August 1910 in Vasilyevka, Naumenko
7. **David** - born 10 December 1892 in Schoenwiese, baptized 2 June 1918 in Schoenwiese, married **Helena Guenther** 7 July 1918 in Schoenwiese, lived in Rosenthal, so their 5 children were born there, David into exile in 1938, Helena eventually migrated to Canada in 1970, died in Calgary in 1974
8. **Maria** (?) - born 14 November 1894 in Skelevatoye, Alexandrovsk, Ekaterinoslav, married Nicholas Regier 27 April 1919
9. Maria (?) - born 5 October 1896, died 18 January 1899 in Schoenwiese
10. **Sara** - born 12 October 1898 in Schoenwiese, baptized 8 June 1919 in Chortitza, Chortitza, married Franz Heinrichs 6 June 1924 in Nikolaifeld, Yazykovo, 1 child, Franz taken and shot 8 March 1938, declared innocent 1956, Sara to Canada, where she died 24 January 1991
11. **Cornelius** - born 20 March 1901 in Schoenwiese, died 5 December 1919 in Chortitza, Chortitza
12. **Heinrich** - born 26 January 1903 in Schoenwiese

Harder, Abraham

Wife Margarita

In 1898 he built a fabric factory

Production exceeded 18,000R per year

Margarita Harder inherited a textile factory (likely that of her husband), and was in charge of its production after 1904

Harder, Heinrich H

Born 22 September 1882

Married **Susanna Bergen** 9 May 1904

She was born 1 October 1883 in Schoenhorst, Chortitza,

parents Salomon Bergen and Helena Martens

Children:

1. **Helena** - born 10 June 1906 in Schoenhorst, Chortitza

2. **Heinrich Heinrich** - born 14 December 1911 in Schoenwiese

Family first lived in Schoenhorst, then likely in Schoenwiese, then migrated to Canada in 1925

Father Heinrich died in Hanley, Saskatchewan 21 April 1947

Son Heinrich died 21 February 1969 in Hanley

Susanna died 8 October 1976

Harder, Peter

Worked in an Aluminium Factory in Zaporozhye October 1941 until September 1943

during the German occupation, worked as translator

Lived in rented quarters during the week, then home to Chortitza for the week-ends

The Aluminium Factory was on the eastern bank of the Dniepr River

It was destroyed by the retreating Russians, then rebuilt by the Germans

About 10-15 Mennonites worked in the plant, some in the office, others as translators

Hildebrand, Kornelius Jakob

Born 9 January 1833, in Insel Chortitza, Chortitza

Parents Jakob Peter Hildebrand and Katharina Friesen

Married Anna Epp 25 January 1854. She was also from Insel Chortitza

Children:

1. Anna - born 1854, died 1854 at the age of 21 days

2. Jakob - born 8 November 1855, married Katharina Braun 13 July 1880

Children: **Jakob, Kornelius, Johann, Kornelius, Katharina, Kornelius, Anna**

Sick from typhus for 18 days, then died 21 September 1899 in Schoenwiese

3. Helena - born 2 April 1857, died 8 June 1877, poisoning from fish

4. Katharina - born 20 December 1858, died 19 January 1861

5. Kornelius - born 27 October 1860, died 28 November 1860

6. Kornelius - born 16 January 1862, died 7 November 1866

7. **Anna** - born 4 September 1863, married Peter Priess 19 April 1884,

(see separate entry for Peter Priess)

Peter was born 27 June 1863 in Rosenthal, Chortitza, parents were

Peter Gerhard Priess and Katharina Epp

Peter became a partner in the firm owned by his father-in-law Peter Hildebrand

Children: **Peter, Anna, Katharina, Kornelius, Anna, Aganetha, Peter, Peter,**

Kornelius, Gerhard

Anna died in Schoenwiese 29 March 1922

Peter Priess died 1 June 1922 in Chortitza

8. **Peter** - born 11 April 1866 in Chortitza, married **Susanna Sawatzky** 15 April 1890,

Children: **Kornelius, Susanna, Peter, Heinrich, Anna, Katharina, Gerhard,**

Jakob, Hermann

9. Katharina - born 15 October 1867, died 5 June 1877, of poisoning by fish

10. Aganetha - born 1 May 1869, married Johann Martens 21 February 1891, lived in

Rosenthal after they got married

Children: Johann, Anna, Maria, Kornelius, Peter, Johann

Aganetha died of kidney failure 4 February 1912

11. Maria - born 21 October 1870 in Chortitza, married Abraham Goertzen 17 July 1888,
Children: Maria, Kornelius, Anna, Abraham, Aganetha, Heinrich, Peter
Maria died 9 May 1922

12. Elisabeth - born 11 January 1873, married Jakob M Dyck 10 October 1896,
Children: Kornelius, Elisabeth, Anna, Martin
Elisabeth died 8 August 1865 in Welland, Ontario

13. **Kornelius** - born 28 November 1875 in Chortitza, married **Margaretha Loewen**
15 November 1901

Was partner in the family business, listed as one of the principal owners

Children: **Anna, Kornelius, Katharina, Margaretha, Dietrich, Jakob, Peter,**
family to Canada in 1923

Cornelius died 1 October 1934 in Harrow, Ontario

Kornelius was an apprentice of Peter Lepp in Chortitza, and established himself as a
clockmaker

Lepp had a foundry, and encouraged Hildebrand to move in that direction

Started by filing the sprockets needed by Lepp for his treadmills, and producing parts for
windmills

Also had a farm

Built his own plough and cleaning mill (*Putzmuehle*), then also built them for others

When 3-shore ploughs became popular, he built many

Officially established as a company in 1878

In 1903 transferred the management to his children.

Name of the firm then was "K Hildebrand's Sons and Priess"

Actually son-in-law Peter Priess was for many years the manager of the company

Originally the factory was in Chortitza, then in 1892 a factory was also opened in Schoenwiese

In 1914 Chortitza employed 80 workers, Schoenwiese 100, with an annual output valued at
500,000R

The factory specialty was reapers and drills, sold as far away as Siberia

Wife Anna died 2 October 1919

Kornelius Jakob Hildebrand died 2 January 1920 in Chortitza, Chortitza, of typhus

Huebert, Heinrich Cornelius

Born 1 April 1871 in Schoenwiese, parents Cornelius Huebert and Anna Janzen

From the Kronsweide Mennonite congregation

Married **Katharina J Dyck** 11 May 1895

Born 8 December 1895 in Chortitza, Chortitza, parents Jakob Dyck and Katharina
Niebuhr

Children: (all born in Schoenwiese)

1. **Jakob** - born 17 October 1896, to USA in 1920, married Grace Lehman, died
3 February 1984 in North Lima, Ohio
2. **Heinrich** - born 24 September 1898, to Canada in 1922, living in Germany 1941
3. **Cornelius** - born 15 November 1900, to Canada in 1923, married Aganetha Klassen,

he died 15 September 1975, she died 27 February 1993, in Leamington, Ontario

4. **Hermann** - born 18 November 1902, to Canada in 1924, married Beate Ruff, then Susanna Penner, died 30 October 1952 in Windsor, Ontario

5. **Wilhelm** - born 3 January 1905, to Canada in 1923, married Maria Epp

6. **Anna** - born 25 November 1907, to Canada in 1924, married Heinrich Schroeder

7. **Katharina** - born 1908, died 1908

8. **Helena** - born 24 October 1910, to Canada in 1923, married Lorenz Burns

While slightly different dates are given by the various families as to when they migrated to Canada, it is highly likely that they all came at the same time

Father Heinrich died 11 March 1936 in Windsor, Ontario

Huebert, Kornelius

Wife **Mrs Huebert**

Son **Kornelius** was born 31 May 1893 in Schoenwiese, married Maria Wallmann in 1918, he died 2 April 1922 in Zaporozhye, of typhus

Children:

1. **Kornelius** - born 30 August 1919, likely in Schoenwiese

2. **Liese** - born 11 September 1921 in the Crimea

Isaak, D P

Owner of a store handling books and writing materials in Schoenwiese, near Alexandrovsk
Advertised in *Christlicher Familienkalender* 1911, 1912

Isaak, Peter

Owner of a steam-powered flour mill in Alexandrovsk in the 1870s

Jantzen, Jakob

Wife **Katharina**

Owned a brick and dairy plant in Alexandrovsk by 1895

Wife Katharina was in charge of the dairy plant

Janzen, Andreas

Wife **Mrs Janzen**

Children

By 1867 one of the five Mennonite families living in Alexandrovsk

Among the first to construct a flour mill in Alexandrovsk

He owned 2 businesses valued at 4,500R

Janzen, Bernard

Left the Chortitza Colony for St Petersburg in 1796

The returned to settle in Alexandrovsk

Among the first to settle in Alexandrovsk

Janzen, Gerhard

Elected to Alexandrovsk city council for a multi-year term in 1912

Possibly involved with the Janzen brewery around 1907-1908, when it won a number of medals at international expositions in Paris (1907), Marseille (1908) and London (1908)

The it was called the G G Janzen Brewery (German could actually be H H Janzen)

Janzen, Gerhard

Descendent of the original Heinrich, brewery founder

The last of the Janzens to be involved in the operation of the brewery
Died in Bielefeld, Germany 2007

Janzen, Heinrich

Worked in an Aluminium Factory in Zaporozhye October 1941 until September 1943
during the German occupation, worked as translator

Lived in rented quarters during the week, then home to Chortitza for the weekends

The aluminium plant was on the eastern bank of the Dniepr River

It was destroyed by the retreating Russians, then rebuilt by the Germans

About 10-15 Mennonites worked in the plant, some in the office, others as translators

Janzen, Heinrich Heinrich

Born 30 October 1849 in Schoenwiese; parents Heinrich Jakob Janzen and Marie Klassen

Married Katharina Ekkert 24 October 1874

She was born 31 October 1851, parents August Ekkert and Helena Janzen

Heinrich managed the brewery which was established by his father in 1863

Heinrich died 6 August 1905

Children:

1. **Maria** - born 3 August 1875 in Schoenwiese, married Gerhard Peter Priess
(see Gerhard Peter Priess for details)
2. **Heinrich** - born 7 February 1877, married **Katharina Pauls** 13 May 1903
She was born 13 August 1882 in Nieder-Chortitza, Chortitza, parents Franz Pauls and Katharina Janzen, 8 children, all likely born in Schoenwiese:
Heinrich (1904), **Jakob** (1905), **Franz** (1907), **Heinrich** (1909), **Katharina** (1910), **Abraham** (1912), **Gerhard** (1914), **Anna** (1923) Three died in childhood
Heinrich managed the brewery until it was confiscated in the early 1920s
The family stayed in Russia. Heinrich died 25 July 1931, Katharina died in 1974
3. **Katharina** - born 17 July 1878 in Schoenwiese, married **Jakob J Dyck** on
23 January 1900, lived in Schoenwiese
He was born 20 November 1873 in Chortitza, Chortitza, parents Jakob Dyck
and Katharina Niebuhr. Children:
 1. **Margaretha** - born 14 December 1907 in Schoenwiese, exiled in 1941,
lives in Novosibirsk
 2. **Katharina** - born 8 December 1910, exiled to Novosibirsk, died about
1995
 3. **Erika** - born 28 March 1913, exiled to Siberia, died 4 June 1948
 4. **Justina** - born 7 March 1918, exiled to Siberia
4. **Peter** - born 19 November 1879, married **Katharina Priess** 19 September 1909
She was born 18 July 1887, her parents were Peter Priess and Anna Hildebrand
Lived in Schoenwiese. Children (all born in Schoenwiese):
 1. **Katharina** - born 30 May 1912, exiled to Siberia
 2. **Peter** - born 6 November 1914, exiled to Siberia
 3. **Jakob** - born 24 May 1918, died 26 May 1919 of diphtheria
 4. **Maria** - born 5 October 1920, exiled to SiberiaFather Peter died 2 April 1920 of fever

- Mother Katharina died 30 March 1960, in exile in Siberia
5. Abraham - born 8 July 1881, died 6 November 1982
 6. **Helena** - born 25 June 1883 in Schoenwiese, married **Kornelius C Wiebe** on 8 April 1903, he was born 16 June 1877 in Chortitza, Chortitza, parents Kornelius Wiebe and Maria J Niebuhr, 12 children, the first 10 born in Nieder-Chortitza, the last 2 in Schoenwiese: **Maria** (1904), **Kornelius** (1905), **Peter** (1907), **Kornelius** (1908), **Jakob** (1910), **Helena** (1910) (twins?), **Jakob** (1912), **Helena** (1914), **Katharina** (1916), **Heinrich** (1918), **Sara** (1920), **Martha** (1920) (twins?)
 The family lived in Nieder-Chortitza 1903 to 1918. By 1920 they lived in Schoenwiese. Mother Helena died in Schoenwiese 4 July 1920, of fever, quite likely post-partum infection.
 Father Kornelius died in 1942
 7. **Jakob** - born 25 March 1885 in Schoenwiese, attended *Zentralschule* in Chortitza 1896-1900, partner in the Schoenwiese brewery, minister in the Kronsweide Mennonite Church, married **Helene Peters** from Vasilyevka, Naumenko, probably 13 September 1905, likely 3 children, **Peter**, **Helena**, **Marianna**
 Wife Helena died, married **Maria Wiebe** from Schoenwiese 12 August 1912
 another child, **Maria** born 26 January 1915, died 30 August 1916
 Migrated to Rabbit Lake Saskatchewan, where Jakob was farmer and minister,
 He died 18 February 1938 in Rabbit Lake
 (Many of the dates in this family history as recorded are obviously in error.
 Attempts have been made to correct them where possible.)
 8. **Margaretha** - born 20 August 1886, married **Jakob D Schultz** 23 July 1913
 Jakob was born 23 September 1886, parents Dietrich Schultz and Anna Wiens
 Children:
 1. **Maria** - born 25 June 1914
 2. **Jakob** - born 26 October 1915, exiled in 1937, died 1942 in exile
 3. **Peter** - born 31 March 1917, exiled in 1941, died 1944
 4. **Anna** - born 7 March 1919, eventually to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario
 5. **Margaretha** - born 22 May 1923, married
 Wanted to leave Russia in 1928, but could not get passports, then moved from place to place
 Lived in Nikopol in 1937. Father Jakob and daughter Margaretha arrested in Nikopol 30 November 1937, while mother Margaretha was in Zaporozhye
 Jakob probably died in exile
 Mother Margaretha lived in Novosibirsk in 1962, and died there 2 June 1975
 9. **Anna** - born 15 March 1889 in Schoenwiese, married **Johann Heinrich Janz** on 14 April 1914 in Schoenwiese
 He was born 23 February 1890 in Halbstadt, parents Heinrich Janz and Maria Letkemann
 Children:
 1. **Johann** - born 30 November 1915 in Schoenwiese, married, died

13 July 1981 in Canada

2. **Gerhard** - born 24 August 1917 in Schoenwiese, married

3. **Anna** - born 10 May 1929 in Winnipeg, married

The family therefore had migrated to Winnipeg, Canada before 1929

Father Johann died 8 August 1973, mother Anna died 14 April 1977

10. **Abraham** - born 17 September 1890 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Abraham was very much involved in the management of the brewery, likely after 1910

Married **Aganetha Priess** 31 August 1914

She was born 4 April 1893, parents Peter Priess and Anna Hildebrand

Children:

1. **Anna** - born 1 September 1915 in Schoenwiese, married Fritz Heinrichs, then Helmut Blankenburg, to Canada in 1948, died 8 May 1999 in St Catherines, Ontario

2. **Heinrich** - born 14 May 1918 in Schoenwiese, married Elfrieda Hof in Sundhausen, Germany 12 May 1946

Wife Aganetha died 5 February 1920, of typhus

Married **Maria Unger** 8 May 1921

She was born 26 September 1896 in Franzfeld, Yazykovo Colony, she was the eldest of 10 children of parents Johann Unger and Maria Pauls

She had previously married Wilhelm Kaetler, who died of typhus in 1920

Children:

3. **Johann** - born 19 March 1922, died 12 May 1943 in Tscherkassoe in battle with partisans

4. **Jakob** - born 2 May 1926, died 15 March 1930 of typhus

Abraham was exiled 8 May 1936 and was not seen again, likely died 1937

Maria died 18 August 1994 in St Catherines, Ontario

11. **Johann** - born 23 May 1893 in Schoenwiese

Was a teacher in Schoenwiese, and later in Nieder-Chortitza

Married **Katharina Dyck** 27 May 1918

She was born 6 May 1896 in Pordenau, Molotschna

Parents Gerhard P Dyck and Margaretha Dyck

Children:

1. **Margaretha** - born 11 May 1919 in Schoenwiese, to Canada, registered nurse, never married

2. **Johann** - born 19 December 1920 in Schoenwiese, to Canada, worked for General Motors, never married, died 7 June 1966

3. **Rudolf** - born 6 January 1923 in Schoenwiese, to Canada, metallurgist for General Motors

Family to Canada, Johann was choir director in St Catherines, Ontario

Johann died 11 June 1966 in St Catherines, of a heart attack

Janzen, Heinrich Jacob

Born 29 October 1811

Married Marie Klassen

Eldest son, Heinrich, born 30 October 1849 in Schoenwiese, continued on the family business

Established a brewery in Schoenwiese in 1863

Traditionally the Janzen family had a house on Bierbrauer Street immediately adjacent to the brewery, near Datschnaya Street

He died 5 September 1887

Janzen, Jakob

Wife Mrs Janzen

Family

By 1867 one of the first five Mennonite families living in Alexandrovsk

Among the first to construct a flour mill in Alexandrovsk

He owned 2 businesses valued at 7,500R

Owned a paint store in 1870

Owned a grocery store in 1870

Janzen, Jakob

Born 16 March 1859 in Schoenwiese

Married **Barbara Klassen** in 1881 in Schoenwiese

Children:

1. **Margaretha** - born in Schoenwiese, married Jakob D Epp, 3 children born in Rosthern, Saskatchewan

Barbara died 1884 in Schoenwiese

Jakob married **Margaretha Martens** in 1884 in Schoenwiese

Children:

2. **Helena** - born 1885, married Peter Adrian 3 July 1904, to Canada, 9 children, born in Saskatchewan 1907-1925
3. **Jakob** - born 31 October 1890 in Schoenwiese, married Katharina Epp in Eigenheim, Saskatchewan, 10 children, died 6 September 1969 in Abbotsford, BC
4. **Katharina** - born 7 June 1891 in Schoenwiese, to Saskatchewan, married Peter Janzen, 2 children
5. **Peter** - born 26 February 1892, married Katharina Wiebe, to Saskatchewan, Canada by 1916, 12 children, died 2 March 1959 in Waldheim, Saskatchewan
6. **Anna** - born 26 December 1895 in Schoenwiese, married David Giesbrecht, 11 children, died 24 December 1984 in Rosthern, Saskatchewan
7. **Heinrich** - born 8 March 1899 in Schoenwiese, married Margaret Friesen, then Katharina Neufeld, total of 3 children, born in Saskatchewan
8. **Elisabeth** - born 6 August 1901 in Schoenwiese, married Albert Schmidt from Kansas, 1 daughter
9. **Susanna (Susie)** - born 6 August 1901 (twins) in Schoenwiese, married Johann Bueckert, lived in Waldheim, Saskatchewan, 2 children, died April 1965 in Waldheim

Parents Jakob Janzen and Margaretha Martens seem to have stayed in Russia, where Jakob died 19 July 1931.

A number of the children migrated to Saskatchewan as early as 1907

Mother Margaretha followed the children to Saskatchewan, died in Laird 31 December 1942

Janzen, Jakob

Owned an inn in Alexandrovsk during the 1870s

Janzen, Johann

Born 1 October 1860 in Schoenwiese

Married, at least 1 son, Johann, born 31 December 1885, who may have died 1938 in exile

Son Johann married Helena Rempel, 4 children

Father Johann died 25 July 1927

Janzen, Kornelius Kornelius

Born 9 August 1872 in Schoenwiese

Parents Kornelius Janzen and Maria Krahm

Married **Helena Goertzen** 25 January 1895 in Schoenwiese

She was born 21 February 1875 in Schoenfeld, parents Peter Goertzen and Helene Eitzen

Children: (all born in Schoenwiese)

1. **Kornelius** - born 7 August 1896, married Anna Thiessen, 3 children, died 1939 in the Crimea
2. **Peter** - born 20 March 1898, to Canada in 1925, married Katharina Hamm, died 11 November 1973 in Saskatchewan
3. **Helena** - born 24 October 1899, married Jakob Lehn 17 September 1922, to Canada in 1923, 9 children, died 12 August 1976 in Leamington, Ontario
4. **Anna** - born 5 July 1901, married Peter Sawatzky 24 January 1925, to Canada in 1926, 3 children, died 1 August 1982 in Windsor, Ontario
5. **Heinrich** - born 13 April 1903, died 15 January 1908
6. **Heinrich** - born 21 August 1909, married Anna Sawatzky 25 June 1939 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 3 children, died May 1976 in BC

Father Kornelius was a bank director in Alexandrovsk

Kornelius died 15 January 1920 in Alexandrovsk

Mother Helena died 11 August 1959 in Leamington, Ontario

Janzen, Victor

By 1895 owned a steam-powered flour mill

At that time five of the eight steam-powered mills in the city were owned by Mennonites

Janzen, Wilhelm

By 1895 owned a steam-powered flour mill

At that time five of the eight steam-powered mills in the city were owned by Mennonites

Kampen, Helena Nikolai

Born 6 January 1876 in Schoenwiese

Parents Nikolai (Klaas) Dyck and Maria Falk; sister of Abraham Nikolai Dyck

Married Johann Kampen 2 October 1894

He was born 17 December 1870, parents Jakob Kampen and Anna Klassen

They first lived in the Baratov Colony, then 1910-1912 moved to Gruenfeld, by Slavgorod, Siberia

First 7 children born in Baratov, the last 2 in Gruenfeld
Johann died 28 April 1917 in Gruenfeld.
Helena married a Mr Kasdorf
Helena died 14 May 1963, somewhere in Russia

Klassen, Abraham

In 1912 owned a warehouse selling agricultural machinery
Advertised in the *Christlicher Familienkalendar*

Klassen, Bernard

By 1895 owned a steam-powered flour mill
At that time five of the eight steam-powered mills in the city were owned by Mennonites

Klassen, Caea

Technical designer or technologist at the Kommunar Factory (producer of agricultural equipment) in 1936

Klassen, David Johann

(see minibiography)

Born 22 March 1899 in Fuerstenwerder, Molotschna

Parents Johann Klassen and Anna Penner

In 1917 he was converted, and in August 1918 joined the Mennonite Brethren Church

He started working in the church, teaching Sunday School and directing the youth choir

In December 1924 he worked at the mental hospital Bethania. When it was flooded and a new ordinary hospital built, he continued to work there until 1936

On 12 May 1929 he married Sara Hamm in the Lichtenau Church

In January 1934 they adopted Anna Wiens (born 1931), daughter of friends of theirs

They also had two sons of their own, David (1935) and Ernst (1936)

The night of 7-8 April 1936 David was arrested, and taken to the prison in Zaporozhye

On 26-27 August he was sentenced to seven years labour camp for "Anti-Soviet activities under the guise of religion." His sentence was completed in 1943, but because of the war he was not released until 12 December 1946

Sara, in the mean time, had been sentenced to ten years imprisonment in 1941

Found his children; in the village he preached in homes, also organized a choir

On 1 September 1949 he and five others were arrested. After five months of investigation all six were sentenced to 25 years imprisonment

March 1953 the sentence reduced to ten years. In 1955 he was declared an invalid, and was released to his family on 18 October. They had moved to Karaganda, Kazhakstan

David was soon asked to perform weddings, to speak at funerals and baptisms

In 1957 David and Sara joined the newly organized German Mennonite church in Karaganda.

He was elected elder on 12 September 1957, a position he accepted with some reluctance.

In 1959 the city administration closed the small meeting place, and in September David was arrested. In December he was sentenced to three years imprisonment.

On 29 December 1962 he was in Karabas in the Karaganda region

He had in the memorized many of the hymns, poems and verses that were sent to him. Daily reciting of these treasures encouraged and strengthened him

On 30 April 1965 news from Alma Ata came that he was rehabilitated, and should be released.

He headed for home that evening.
Back in Karaganda he was asked to again assume the position as elder. This time he refused,
but continued to be on the Church Council
In 1973 lost his left eye, then in 1979 lost sight in right eye
In 1980 the Klassens moved to the home of their adopted daughter, Anna
On 13 March 1986 Sara died
In July 1989 he lived in the home of his son David, then in August 1990 he died

Klassen, Jakob J

Secretary of the Chortitza Volost, 1873-1919
Shot by Makhno bandits in Alexandrovsk in 1919

Klassen, Johann Peter

Born 15 May 1868 in Neu Schoensee, Ekaterinoslav
Parents Peter Klassen and Aganetha Schultz
Married **Katharina Wieler** 27 September 1891 in Franzfeld, Yazykovo Colony
Children:

1. **Peter** - born 12 January 1893, went missing 1922
2. **Helena** - born 2 June 1895 in Neu Schoenwiese, died 1975 in Winnipeg, Manitoba
3. **Aganetha** - born 22 August 1897 in Schoenwiese, married Cornelius Huebert
(see note Cornelius Huebert)
4. **Abram** - born 22 May 1899 in Neu Schoenwiese, died 1909 of typhus
5. **Johann** - born 17 June 1910 in Schoenwiese, married Katharina Schellenberg in
1929 in Manitoba, 2 children, died 1973 in Leamington, Ontario
6. **Katharina (Kathe)** - born 21 January 1905 in Schoenwiese, married Gerhard Paetkau,
to Canada
7. **Heinrich** - born 31 March 1905 in Schoenwiese, married Helena Wieler, then Anna
Huebert, died 8 June 1978, buried in Chicago, Illinois
8. **Kornelius** - born 7 April 1907, to Canada, lived in Winnipeg, Manitoba

Mother Katharina died 31 August 1909 in Neu Schoenwiese, died of typhus
Father Johann married **Katharina Dyck** 8 May 1911 in Chortitza, Chortitza
Children:

9. **Victor** - born 13 September 1912 in Schoenwiese, to Canada likely with parents about
1926, married Helena Elfrieda Dyck 19 July 1942, 3 children, Dolores, John,
Kathleen, served in RCAF, died 26 February 1998 in Vancouver, BC (see Helena
Elfrieda Dyck) (see also Abraham Dyck entry)
10. **Eduard** - born 23 December 1914 in Schoenwiese, married Melita Braun, to
Canada, died 5 September 1996 in Winnipeg

Johann was elder of the Kronsweide Mennonite Church in Schoenwiese 1907-1923
After migration to Canada was elder of the Schoenwieser Mennonite Church in Winnipeg
from its founding in 1926

Was known as a well-read, somewhat restless person, very direct and not too much concerned
about diplomatic niceties

He was a writer, both prose and poetry, publishing ten books

Johann died in 1947 on Pentecost Sunday in Vancouver, BC, but was buried in Winnipeg

Koop, Abraham Abraham

Born 31 August 1863 in Chortitza, Chortitza, baptized 28 May 1884 in Chortitza

Married Katharina Hermann Niebuhr 20 September 1887 in Chortitza

She was the daughter of Hermann Niebuhr and Justina Dyck

Children:

1. **Katharina** - born 29 January 1888, married **Jakob H Janz** 22 May 1910, had **daughter** who died in childhood, Jakob worked for Koop and Hoelker in Schoenwiese, Jakob exiled in 1937, Katharina died in Asiatic Russia in 1961
2. Justina - born 9 October 1899, died 21 November 1890
3. **Maria** - born 11 November 1891 in Schoenwiese, married **Cornelius Hildebrand** 22 May 1916 in Schoenwiese, 3 children:
 1. **George** - born 5 March 1917, died 3 September 1918
 2. **Louise (Roswitha)** - born 13 January 1919, did not marry, to Canada with mother, died 25 September 1975
 3. **Heinrich (Heinz)** - born 29 May 1928 in Schoenwiese, to Canada with mother, married Victoria Toews, had 3 children, Elizabeth, Paul, James

Cornelius died 21 March 1930 in Berlin after an operation on his head, Maria and children to St Catherines in Canada in 1949, died 18 June 1980

4. Helena - born 28 October 1893, died 2 June 1900
5. **Justina** - born 30 August 1895, married **Jakob Gerhard Bock** August 1917, total of 6 children: **Victor** (1919-1920), **Georg** (1921) and **Victor** (1924-1924) born in Schoenwiese. Jakob worked for the Koop factory, family then moved to Kharkov in 1924. Children probably born in Kharkov: Irene (1926-1927), Margaretha (Gredel) (1926-1927)(twins). They then likely moved back to Schoenwiese, where **Ernst** was born (1929, chemistry professor in Winnipeg, died 1994). Jakob was arrested 7 July 1937 likely in Schoenwiese, Justina died 17 April 1949 in Winnipeg, Canada (also see entry for Jakob in Kharkov)
6. **Hermann** - born 5 October 1898 in Schoenwiese, married **Aganeta Wiens**, migrated to Canada in 1926, lived in Kitchener, Ontario, she died 13 April 1982, he died 10 June 1982
7. **Margaretha** - born 7 October 1901 in Schoenwiese, married **Franz Peters** 25 December 1925 in Schoenwiese, children:
 1. **Hermann** - born 3 March 1927, died 31 October 1948 in Latvia
 2. **Rudolf** - born 5 August 1928, never married, migrated to St Catherines, Canada

Franz died 3 August 1959, Margaretha died of a heart attack 1 August 1997

Abraham as a manager of the Koop factory

Abraham was elected to city council in 1917, but was unable to serve his term because of the Revolution

Owned a house on Datschnaya Street in Schoenwiese/Zaporozhye, near the Niebuhr mill

Abraham died in 1938, likely as part of the Stalin Purge, wife and 3 children to Ontario after World War II, Katharina died 25 January 1960 in Vineland, Ontario

Koop, Abraham Jakob

Born 8 October 1838 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Parents Jakob Abraham Koop and Margaretha Lepp

Married **Katharina Paetkau** 18 February 1861

Her parents were Jakob Paetkau and Margaretha Dyck of Chortitza, Chortitza
The couple had 12 children, some of whom were active in the management of the family business. All children were born in Chortitza, Chortitza

1. **Jakob** - born 21 January 1862, married Katharina Jakob Neufeld 12 May 1888, Jakob managed the Koop factory in Chortitza, both died in Chortitza of typhus, Katharina on 15 October 1919, Jakob on 7 February 1920
2. **Abraham** - born 31 August 1863, married Katharina Hermann Niebuhr on 20 September 1887, 7 children, 2 of which died in childhood
(See separate listing Abraham Abraham Koop)
3. **Peter** - born 15 January 1865, married Anna Kornelius Loewen, had 9 children, 3 of whom died in childhood, Peter assisted his father in the management of the Chortitza factory, he was also for a time the mayor of Chortitza, when they purchased a factory in Einlage in 1903, the family moved there, together with his brother David he was the manager there, wife Anna died 6 September 1915 in Einlage, Peter died 8 July 1936 in Chortitza
4. **Helena** - born 23 October 1866, died 7 September 1870 in Chortitza, Chortitza
5. **Katharina** - born 19 December 1868, married Jakob Hermann Niebuhr on 20 August 1887, he died 19 February 1932 in Zaporozhye, she died 4 November 1943 in Lodz, Poland (likely on the Trek)
6. **Johann** - born 15 August 1870, married **Sara Hermann Niebuhr** 18 April 1893,
Children:
 1. **Abraham** - born 20 September 1895 in Schoenwiese, migrated to Canada, where he married Anna Becker in Kitchener, Ontario in 1931, moved to Ohio, then Pennsylvania, he owned a manufacturing company, died 19 December 1968 in Wernerville, Pennsylvania
 2. **Hermann** - born 9 April 1897, missing in 1920 in the Crimea
 3. **Katharina** - born 12 November 1898 in Schoenwiese, married **Abram Klassen** 26 September 1926, migrated to Waterloo, Ontario, the Klassens were known to be very tall, she died 10 December 1970, he died 14 December 1987
 4. **Justina** - born 26 May 1902 in Schoenwiese, died 29 May 1906
Johann and Sara migrated to Canada in 1926, settling in Waterloo, Ontario, where he died 19 March 1936, and she likely 21 June 1967
7. **David** - born 8 April 1872, married Anna Klassen 19 April 1898, with Peter became the manager of the Koop factory in Einlage in 1903, so they moved there, Anna died in Chortitza, David died in Chortitza 20 January 1920 of typhus
8. **Helena** - born 13 October 1873, married Heinrich H Epp 5 September 1896, he studied Philology and History at the University of Moscow, became principal

at the Chortitza *Zentralschule*, Helena died 25 January 1920 of typhus, Heinrich was sent to Siberia in the 1930s and presumably died there

9. Heinrich - born 6 May 1876, died 25 September 1876

10. Margaretha - born 14 November 1877, married Jakob Winter 25 June 1900, Jakob died 1 July 1907 in Schoenwiese, Margaretha died 25 January 1920 in Chortitza of typhus

11. Heinrich - born 13 March 1880, died 1 January 1881

12. Heinrich - born 14 January 1882, married Katharina Pauls 2 May 1904, Heinrich died 1 January 1920 in Chortitza of typhus, Katharina died 28 February 1979 in Coaldale, Alberta

Father Abraham was first an apprentice in the workshop and factory of Peter Lepp in 1856, first learning to be a watchmaker

Opened a blacksmith shop in 1864, first producing grinding machines and iron parts for windmills

In 1874 built his own foundry, in 1877 had to enlarge his buildings

In 1877 first steam engine to power the factory; no longer needed horses

Produced ploughs, cleaning mills and binders, especially binders

In 1888 built a factory in Schoenwiese

In 1903 bought a factory in Einlage, subsequently managed by sons Peter and David

In 1908 total output was worth 610,000R; there were 81 workers in Chortitza, in Einlage 100, and in Alexandrovsk 288

In 1914, at the fiftieth anniversary, it was the second largest Mennonite industry in Russia

Wife Katharina died 12 February 1910 in Chortitza

Abraham died 19 January 1920 also in Chortitza

Koop, Abraham J

Elected to Alexandrovsk city council for a multi-year term in 1912

Koop, Kaethe

Technical designer or technologist at the Kommunar Factory (producer of agricultural equipment) in 1936

Krahn, Gerhard

His business enterprise in 1870 was valued at only 3,000R

First Mennonite to serve on the Alexandrovsk city council (1885-1889)

He was very busy, so he missed many of the meetings. He was reprimanded for this

By 1895 owned a steam-powered flour mill

At that time five of the eight steam-powered mills in the city were owned by Mennonites

Krahn, Mr

By 1895 was part owner, together with Mr Kroeger, of a grain trading company

Kroeger, Mr

By 1895 was part owner, together with Mr Krahn, of a grain trading company

Langemann, Katharina

Worked in an Aluminium Factory in Zaporozhye October 1941 until September 1943

During the German occupation, worked in the office

Lived in rented quarters during the week, then home to Chortitza for the weekends

The aluminium plant was on the eastern bank of the Dniepr River

It was destroyed by the retreating Russians, then rebuilt by the Germans

About 10-15 Mennonites worked in the plant, some in the office, others as translators

Lepp, Johann Gerhard

Born 9 November 1861 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Parents Gerhard Peter Lepp and Margaretha Klassen. Gerhard was the eldest son of Peter Peter Lepp, the original founder of Lepp & Wallmann

Attended Realschule in Ekaterinoslav in the late 1870s and also had some business training, then in 1879 inherited part of the family firm, together with uncles Peter and Abram Lepp

Married **Justina Hermann Niebuhr** 14 October 1884

Lived in Schoenwiese

Children:

1. **Hermann** - born 13 July 1887 in Schoenwiese, married Olga Janzen 10 January 1926, she was the daughter of Heinrich Janzen of Orechov, he was arrested in Russia 1937, and likely executed, she died in 1986
2. **Helena** - born 16 January 1890 in Schoenwiese, married Peter A Wallmann in 1917, children: **Paul** (1918), **Maria**
he died 26 September 1937 in Russia, she died 1968 in Kitchener, Ontario
3. **Katharina** - born 15 July 1893, died in Canada
4. **Peter** - born 5 April 1896, died 21 July 1919 in Russia
5. **Gerhard** - born 7 July 1899 in Schoenwiese, served in *Selbstschutz* and later in the White Army, fled to Crimea, spent one year in Constantinople, to the USA in 1921, worked as engineer, married Helga Janzen about 1933, died 10 May 1990 in Tallmadge, Ohio

Was part owner of the Lepp & Wallmann Company, and was likely the manager for some time

Elected to Alexandrovsk city council for a multi-year term in 1912

He died 13 July 1920 in the Crimea, she died 28 July 1944 in the Warthegau Region of Poland (was likely on the Trek)

Loewen, Andreas

Wife Mrs Loewen

Children

By 1867 one of the five Mennonite families living in Alexandrovsk

Among the first to construct a flour mill in Alexandrovsk

His enterprise cost 2,000R

Loewen, Johann Johann

Imprisoned in Stalin Purge in Friedensfeld

Imprisoned in 1937 in Nikopol, tortured, transferred to Zaporozhye, and shot 27 October 1937

Son Nikolai Johann Loewen taken in 1937 as well

Martens, Olga

Technical designer or technologist at the Kommunar Factory (producer of agricultural equipment) in 1936

Neufeld, Anna Nikolai

Born 30 September 1871 in Schoenwiese

Parents Nikolai (Klaas) Dyck and Maria Falk; sister of Abraham Nikloli Dyck

Married Dietrich Neufeld 17 June 1890

He was born 6 April 1862 in Novo Podolsk, Judenplan

They first lived in Neu Chortitza, Schlachtin Colony until about 1900, then moved to Dolinovka, Orenburg

11 children, the first 6 born in Neu Chortitza, the remaining 5 in Dolinovka

Some of the children migrated to Canada

Dietrich died in Dolinovka, Orenburg 5 July 1927, Anna died there 7 August 1965

Neufeld, Helene

Worked in an Aluminium Factory in Zaporozhye October 1941 until September 1943

During the German occupation, worked as translator

Lived in rented quarters during the week, then home to Chortitza for the week-ends

The aluminium plant was on the eastern bank of the Dniepr River

It was destroyed by the retreating Russians, then rebuilt by the Germans

About 10-15 Mennonites worked in the plant, some in the office, others as translators

Neufeld, Peter P

Completed teacher training in Chortitza in 1896

Taught in Rosenthal 1896-1903

Taught in Schoenwiese 1903-1910

Thereafter taught in the Chortitza *Maedchenschule* 1910-1920, with the exception of the time he served in the *Sanitaetsdienst* starting in 1914

1922 was elected elder of the Chortitza Mennonite Church

Died 1927. He was a well liked teacher and elder.

Niebuhr, Hermann Abraham

Born 12 July 1830 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony

Parents Abraham Niebuhr and Sarah Neufeld

Married **Justina Dyck** 31 May 1854 in Chortitza, Chortitza

She was born 24 June 1836, parents Jakob Dyck and Maria Martens

They lived in Chortitza most of the time, except for a brief time, or possibly even a visit to Kherson, where their son Jakob was said to have been born in 1862

The couple had 10 children: (All born in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony except Jakob)

1. Sarah - born 14 December 1855, died 1 September 1856

2. Jakob - born 7 January 1857, died same day

3. **Maria** - born 18 January 1858, married Andreas Wallmann, he died 7 November 1930, she died 1 September 1936 (see separate listing of Andreas Andreas Wallmann)

4. Jakob - born 23 April 1860, died 26 May 1860

5. **Jakob** - born 4 May 1862, married Katharina Abraham Koop 20 August 1887, managed the Niebuhr industrial empire after his father was murdered in 1906, wrote an account of his experiences, Jakob died 19 February 1932 in Zaporozhye, Katharina 4 November 1943 in Lodz, Poland (presumably she was on the Trek) (see separate entry for Jakob Hermann Niebuhr)

6. Hermann - born 10 March 1864, died 2 November 1864
7. **Justina** - born 31 October 1865, married Johann Gerhard Lepp, he died 13 July 1920 in the Crimea, she died July 1944 Warthegau region of Poland (presumably she was on the Trek) (see separate listing for Johann Gerhard Lepp)
8. **Katharina** - born 20 March 1869, married Abraham Abraham Koop 20 September 1887, he died 1938, she died 26 January 1960 in Vineland, Ontario
9. Sara - born 12 June 1872, married Johann Abraham Koop 19 April 1893, he died 19 March 1936 in Waterloo, Ontario, she died 21 June 1967
10. Anna - born 19 February 1875, died of tuberculosis 11 March 1881

The four adult daughters and one son all married into the industrial elite families, thereby keeping the money among the "Niebuhr Dynasty"

Wife Justina died 24 May 1883 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony

Hermann remarried, **Katharina Hamm** on 4 August 1885

She was born 20 February 1844, parents Abram Hamm and Katharina Willms

In 1880 Hermann constructed a steam-powered flour mill near the Lozovaya-Sevastopol Railway Line running through the city

Initial cost of constructing the mill was 24,000R. It was eventually valued at 131,000R

By 1895 five of the eight steam-powered mills in the city were owned by Mennonites

With extension of the Ekaterinaslav Railway Company line into Schoenwiese, Niebuhr constructed new mills both in Schoenwiese and Alexandrovsk

Hermann was the "godfather" of the corporate elite "Niebuhr Dynasty" which included most of the major agricultural machinery factories and mills in Chortitza/Schoenwiese/Alexandrovsk.

At some point the Niebuhrs actually moved to Alexandrovsk. It is difficult to be sure who lived where. The presumption is that the older children actually spent some time living in Schoenwiese/Alexandrovsk

His home was built at great expense and with the eye to luxurious comfort, without any consideration for simplicity. It was equipped with electricity and telephone

Hermann was attacked by robbers in his home the night of 5 August 1906 and severely injured

He died from his wounds at 6 PM on 7 August

Funeral was 12 August; he was buried beside his first wife

Wife Katharina was also wounded in the attack, but recovered

Some of the hired help was suspected and convicted for the crime

Wife Katharina died 13 October 1910

Niebuhr, Jakob Hermann

Born 4 May 1862, likely in Kherson, south Russia

Parents Hermann Abraham Niebuhr and Justina Dyck

Married **Katharina Abraham Koop** 20 August 1887

Her parents were Abraham Jakob Koop and Katharina Paetkau

Married in Chortitza, then after the marriage moved to Schoenwiese

Children: (likely all born in Schoenwiese)

1. **Katharina** - born 17 June 1888, married **Wilhelm Boettcher**, from Germany, 3 children, during World War I they were sent to northern Siberia, after the war

- they were permitted to return to Germany, Katharina died 23 January 1979
2. Hermann - born 8 May 1890, died 19 March 1891
 3. **Justina** - born 18 December 1891, married **Julius Von Kampen** 18 August 1918
 He was born 2 July 1883 in Chortitza, Chortitza
 One daughter: **Eleanor (Leni)** born 5 October 1919 in Schoenwiese, she married
Michael Sannes, one son Felix born 20 November 1940 in Zaporozhye,
 Michael shot down over Stalingrad in 1943
 In 1943 Justina, Eleanor and **Felix** to Poland, then West Germany, and
 St Catharines, Canada in 1948, to Vancouver BC in 1956. Eleanor a
 music teacher in Vancouver
 Julius died 24 January 1920 in Schoenwiese of typhus
 Justina died 2 December 1960 in Vancouver
 Eleanor died 18 January 2000 in Vancouver
 Felix eventually received a Ph D in Physics in Montreal
 4. Jakob - born 19 August 1893, died same day
 5. **Abraham** - born 16 August 1894, married **Margaretha Goerzen** on 1 February 1931,
 one daughter **Margaretha**, born 16 November 1931 in Schoenwiese, Abraham
 was taken into a forced labour camp on 27 September 1941, and was never seen
 again, Margaretha and her daughter came to Canada in 1948, and was alive until at
 least 1997. Daughter Margaretha married **Paul Thiessen** 8 August 1951 in
 Vancouver, BC. (see Heinrich Thiessen for more details)
 6. **Maria** - born 9 November 1896 in Schoenwiese, married Nicolai Klassen on 24 July
 1921 in the Crimea, 2 children, migrated to Canada, Nicolai died 24 July 1975,
 Maria died 5 January 1984, both in Vancouver, BC
 7. **Jakob** - born 30 September 1898, exiled
 8. **Helena** - born 3 December 1900, married **Heinrich Wiebe** from Nieder-Chortitza, on
 18 October 1924
 Children:
 1. **Heinrich (Heinz)** - born 5 September 1925 in Schoenwiese,
 died 2 September 1943 in Budapest, Hungary
 2. Maria Magdalena - born 6 September 1928 in Orenburg, eventually
 to Vancouver, married, 3 children
 Heinrich died 2 September 1943 in exile, Helena died 12 September 1943 in
 Zaporozhye
 9. **Sarah** (Jennie) - born 23 October 1902, married **Helmut (Waldemar?) Huebert**, one
 daughter **Olga**, lived in Vancouver, BC, Helmut died 28 October 1938, Sarah died
 19 October 1982
 10. **Hermann** - born 23 December 1904, married Lieselotte Feuerhahn 23 September
 1934, lived in Germany, 1 child, he died 19 February 1989
 11. **Anna** - born 14 January 1907, died 11 July 1908
- Jakob managed the Niebuhr industrial empire after his father was murdered in 1906.
 The principal corporation was H A Niebuhr and Co, although he was also involved in
 other business ventures

He purchased the Alexandrabad Sanatorium in 1910, renovated it in 1911, then some time before 1914, gave it over to his son-in-law Wilhelm Boettcher
Elected to Alexandrovsk city council for a multi-year term in 1912
Business leader who received public recognition for his contributions to the city of Alexandrovsk, being awarded the title of "Hereditary Honorable Citizen"
During the Russian Revolution fled to the Crimea with part of his family, leaving their home 2 January 1918. They lived in the village of Minlertschik
Jakob wrote an account of his experiences, in the form of letters written to his favourite sister, Maria Wallmann
Jakob died 19 February 1932 in Zaporozhye
Wife Katharina died 4 November 1943 in Lodz, Poland (presumably she was on the Trek)

Pauls, Kornelius

Design engineer at the Kommunar Factory
Together with others recipient of the Order of Lenin in 1931 for designing and producing the first combine in the Soviet Union
Arrested 8 April 1937, and executed 17 September 1937

Penner, Gerhard

Born 18 February 1838
Married **Anna Neufeld**
Children:

1. **Gerhard**
2. **Maria** - born 3 March 1882, died 19 November 1960 in Steinbach, Manitoba
3. **Peter** - born 21 November 1883 in Schoenwiese, married Helena Vogt, 4 children, died 25 June 1958 in St Catherines, Ontario (also see Helena Vogt)

Father Gerhard killed by Mahkno bandits in 1921. Anna died 2 May 1927 in Steinbach, Manitoba

Peters, Johann

Owner of a blacksmith shop in Alexandrovsk in the 1870s

Peters, Maria

Born 16 June 1900 in Einlage
Parents Jakob Heinrichs and Katharina Heinrichs; lived on the Estate Korneyevka
With start of Revolution moved to Nikolaipol
Pentecost 1921 baptized by Elder Jakob Klassen on the basis of her faith, and was accepted into the Kronsweide Mennonite Church
Married Jakob Peters 28 February 1925; 3 children, 1 daughter, 2 sons; eldest son died as child
Sent to Siberia; husband exiled 7 September 1937
1948 migrated, with children, to Winnipeg, Manitoba
Died 23 January 1986

Petkau, J

By 1895 owner of a grain storage facility

Priess, Anna

Technical designer or technologist at the Kommunar Factory (producer of agricultural equipment) in 1936

Priess, Gerhard Peter

Born 20 March 1865

Brother of Peter Priess, factory owner

Married **Maria Janzen**, daughter of the brewery owner on 15 April 1897

She was born 3 August 1875

They lived in Schoenwiese. He was a book keeper in one of the Hildebrand Priess factories
Children:

1. **Gerhard** - born 18 January 1898
2. **Katharina** - born 28 February 1903
3. **Peter** - born 24 November 1908, left for Canada in 1927 or 1928
4. **Maria** - born 5 August 1911, married Wallentin Glasner

Wife Maria died of typhus in Schoenwiese on 5 February 1920

Husband Gerhard died of typhus in Schoenwiese the following day, 6 February 1920

Priess, Peter Peter

Born 27 June 1853 in Rosenthal, Chortitza

Parents Peter Gerhard Priess and Katharina Epp

Married Anna Hildebrand 19 April 1884, daughter of Cornelius Jakob Hildebrand and Anna Epp

Became business partner with his father-in-law, in Hildebrand and Priess factory which produced agricultural machinery

Children: Peter (1885), Anna (1886), Katharina (1887), Kornelius (1889), Anna (1891), Aganetha (1893), Peter (1895), Peter (1898), Kornelius (1899), Gerhard (1903)

Elected to Alexandrovsk city council for a multi-year term in 1912

Again elected to city council in 1917, but was unable to serve his term because of the Revolution

Anna died 29 March 1922 in Schoenwiese, Peter died 1 June 1922

Reimer, Peter

Among the first to settle in Alexandrovsk, in 1809

Remained resident until only 1816, not mentioned thereafter

Rempel, Gerhard

Design engineer at the Kommunar Factory

Together with others recipient of the Order of Lenin in 1931 for designing and producing the first combine in the Soviet Union

Arrested 8 April 1937, and executed 17 September 1937

Siemens, Johann

Owner of a windmill in Alexandrovsk in the 1870s

Sudermann, Maria

Worked in an Aluminium Factory in Zaporozhye October 1941 until September 1943

During the German occupation, worked as translator

Lived in rented quarters during the week, then home to Chortitza for the weekends

The aluminium plant was on the eastern bank of the Dniepr River

It was destroyed by the retreating Russians, then rebuilt by the Germans

About 10-15 Mennonites worked in the plant, some in the office, others as translators

Tavonius, Dr Erich A

1872-1927

Doctor working mainly at the hospital in Muntau, where he was the chief of staff, and did most of the surgery

Lived in Muntau, but must also have done a considerable amount of work in Schoenwiese/Zaporozhye as well

Owned and presumably worked in his clinic on the corner of Datschnaya and Vachalnaya Streets

Thiessen, Heinrich

Born 16 May 1891 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Married **Elfriede Priess** 9 September 1921 in Schoenwiese

She was born 8 September 1895 in Rosenthal, parents Jakob Priess and Pauline Hahn

Son **Paul** born 13 June 1930 in Schoenwiese

Heinrich exiled 2 February 1938

Elfriede and Paul landed in Halifax 12 November 1947

(some sources say Elfriede died the last year of the war)

Paul married Margaretha Niebuhr, also from Schoenwiese, 8 August 1951 in Vancouver, had 3 children

Paul died 14 May 1986

Tiessen, David

Born 6 March 1911 in Konstantinovka

Parents Franz Tiessen and Anna Unger

Youngest of 7 children

Mother died when he was a few weeks old

Father married Katerina Dyck - another 2 children

Father died when David was age 7; raised by uncle Dietrich Tiessen in Einlage

Attended village school and *Fortbildungsschule* in Einlage

Worked as apprentice in a business, then appointed to work for the VBHH

In August 1931 married **Luise Ediger**; had **1 son**

Later worked as a bookkeeper in Zaporozhye, likely from about 1924-1941, when German troops occupied the region

During the time of the occupation worked for the local government

Autumn 1943 fled westward with the retreating German Army

1948 to Paraguay, 1951 to Canada

In Winnipeg worked for Qualico until he retired in 1981

On the Board of Directors of Bethania Personal Care Home

Died 29 January 1986

Toews, Olga

Her family, Badowsky, was a prominent non-Mennonite business family in Zaporozhye

She had at least 1 son, who later lived in Berlin

Vogt, Andreas Andreas

Born 1 April 1854 in Schoenwiese

Parents Andreas Vogt and Maria Penner

Married **Aganetha Block** 13 February 1879 in Schoenwiese

She was born 13 July 1857 in Kronsgarten, Chortitza, parents David Block and Aganetha Falk

Children: (all born in Schoenwiese)

1. **Aganetha** - born 22 December 1879, married **Jakob Von Kampen** 7 January 1901, **2 children**, Jakob died in exile 5 September 1937, Aganetha died 26 September 1955 in Winnipeg
2. **Maria** - born 25 August 1881, died 4 January 1961 in Winnipeg
3. **Anna** - born 16 September 1883, died 21 January 1975 in Winnipeg
4. **Andreas** - born 20 July 1885, married Maria Wiens, August 1913, 2 children (1 adopted), Andreas died 3 November 1919, Maria died 14 November 1928 in Hanley, Saskatchewan
5. **Abram** - born 16 December 1887, married Elisabeth Epp, then Maria Unger, 4 children, Mennonite genealogist, died 26 September 1968 in Steinbach, Manitoba
6. **David** - born 12 October 1890, died June 1920 in Feodysia, Crimea of typhoid fever
7. **Helena** - born 28 June 1892, married **Peter Penner** 8 August 1920, 4 children, first child, **Leonard**, born in Schoenwiese, the next one at the border while migrating to Canada in 1923, died 26 April 1973 in St Catherines, Ontario
8. **Katharina** - born 10 January 1894, married **Arnold Bernhard Dyck** 13 June 1918 in Schoenwiese, he was writer in Low and High German, 4 children, first child, **Hedwig**, born in Schoenwiese, Katharina died 14 April 1966 in Vancouver, BC
9. **Johann** - born 2 November 1897, married Helena Unrau 21 May 1921 in Nikolaifeld, Yazykovo, 3 children, died 2 October 1956 in Steinbach, Manitoba
10. **Peter** - born 14 October 1900, married Susanna Reimer 25 October 1925 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, 6 children, died 12 March 1989 in Winnipeg

Father Andreas was a leading minister in the Frisian Kronsweide Mennonite Church in Schoenwiese

He died 22 December 1914 in Schoenwiese

Wife Aganetha migrated to Canada, and died 4 September 1930 in Steinbach, Manitoba

Von Kampen, Julius

From Chortitza

Was in the Medical Corps in Moscow during World War I (probably the same person)

Studied at the University of Moscow, Faculty of Law

Practiced as a lawyer in Alexandrovsk

Wallmann, Andreas Andreas (I)

Born 12 June 1835

Son of Andreas Wallmann, who was born 18 April 1810 in Radichev, Russia

Married Sarah Klassen, who was born 13 April 1834, she was daughter of Bernhard Klassen

Children:

1. Bernhard - born 27 January 1856, died 3 April 1856
2. Andreas - born 10 June 1857
(see separate listing Andreas Andreas Wallmann II)

Sarah died 14 May 1858

Father Andreas married Katharina Lepp, second child of Peter Peter Lepp, on 7 September 1858
Andreas had some capital, and became a partner in the firm Lepp & Wallmann, some time in the 1880s

In 1892, listed as a factory owner, was on the executive of the Chortitza Volost administration

He died 10 November 1900, Katharina died 7 May 1912

His son, Andreas took over the business aspects of the factory, when the senior

Andreas died

Wallmann, Andreas Andreas (II)

Born 10 June 1857

Parents Andreas Andreas Wallmann and Sarah Klassen

Married **Maria H Niebuhr**, who was born 21 June 1858

Her parents were Hermann Niebuhr and Justina Dyck

Children:

1. **Andreas** - born 1 December 1881 (probably called Andreas Andreas Wallmann III), married **Helene Schroeder** in 1906, he was a partner in the Lepp & Wallmann factory, he died 20 December 1919, she died 23 March 1926
2. **Katharina** - born 13 September 1885, married Isaak Thiessen 25 November 1912, she died in exile 28 September 1939, he died 10 July 1960 in Russia
3. **Peter** - born 8 September 1889, married Helena Lepp 1917, he died 26 September 1937 in Russia, she died 1968 in Kitchener, Ontario (see also Helena Lepp)
4. **Hermann** - born 14 August 1891, married Margareta Penner, he died 1942, she died 1973
5. **Jakob** - born 6 November 1893, married Katharina Dyck, died 7 August 1982
6. **Maria** - born 12 December 1885, married **Kornelius Huebert** in 1918

Kornelius was born 31 May 1893 in Schoenwiese

Children:

1. **Kornelius** - born 30 August 1919, likely in Schoenwiese
2. **Elisabeth (Liese)** - born 11 September 1921 in the Crimea
Father Kornelius died 2 April 1922 in Zaporozhye, of typhus
Maria and Elisabeth migrated to St Catherines, Ontario, where Maria died 22 April 1970
Elisabeth married Gerhard Froese, and died 5 April 2000 in St Catherines
7. **Paul** - born 15 October 1901, married Katharina Pauls 10 August 1925 in Alexanderthal, he died 13 June 1990, in St Catherines, Ontario, she died 6 July 1998 in Ontario

Probably heavily involved with the Lepp & Wallmann business after the death of his father

In 1903 the company had 1,197 shares, of which the Wallmann family owned 320

Business leader who received public recognition for his contributions to the city of Alexandrovsk, being awarded the title of "Hereditary Honorable Citizen"

Andreas died 7 November 1930, Maria died 14 February 1936

Warkentin, Johann

Owner of a public house (pub) in Alexandrovsk in the 1870s

Weissnar, Emma

Technical designer or technologist at the Kommunar Factory (producer of agricultural equipment) in 1936

Wiebe, Helene

Technical designer or technologist at the Kommunar Factory (producer of agricultural equipment) in 1936

Wiebe, Jakob Jakob

Born 21 November 1879

Married **Justina J Dyck** 26 May 1902

She was born 17 January 1880 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Parents Jakob Dyck and Katharina Niebuhr

Children:

1. **Jakob** - born 1 April 1903 on Bergmannsthal Estate, lived in Schoenwiese, married Maria Braun 10 November 1928, 3 children, died 5 September 1937 in exile
2. **Abram** - born 20 October 1906 in Schoenwiese, married, at least 1 child
3. **Heinrich** - born 14 April 1909 in Schoenwiese, married Marie McDonald 12 June 1942 in Canada, 5 children

Justina died 16 August 1911 in Schoenwiese

Jakob married Margaretha Wieler in 1927

She was born 9 May 1889

Child:

4. **Hugo** - born 25 September 1928 in Winnipeg, married, 3 children

Jakob died 8 February 1951 in Vancouver, BC

Margaretha died 23 March 1967 in Vancouver, BC

Wiebe, Kornelius Kornelius

Born 16 June 1877 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Married **Helena Janzen** 8 April 1903 in Schoenwiese

She was born 25 June 1883 in Schoenwiese, parents Heinrich Janzen and Katharina Ekkert

Likely lived in Nieder-Chortitza until at least 1918, then moved to Schoenwiese

Children: (the first ten born in Nieder-Chortitza, the last two in Schoenwiese)

1. **Maria** - born 7 May 1904
2. **Kornelius** - born 31 July 1905, died 10 September 1906 in Schoenwiese
3. **Peter** - born 15 March 1907, died 20 October 1907 in Nieder-Chortitza
4. **Kornelius** - born 25 August 1908, married Sara Kliewer, 5 children, died 25 March 1990 in Novosibirsk
5. **Jakob** - born 26 March 1910, married, at least 1 child
6. **Helena** - born 5 January 1912, died 27 October 1912 in Nieder-Chortitza
7. **Jakob (?)** - born 22 January 1912, married Helena Kliewer, at least 1 child
8. **Helena** - born 24 September 1914, married Russian man, divorced, married again, at least 1 daughter, Olga
9. **Katharina** - born 26 June 1916, married Wilhelm Redekop
10. **Heinrich** - born 8 June 1918, married

11. **Sara** - born 8 June 1920 in Schoenwiese, died in 1948

12. **Martha** - born 21 June 1920 in Schoenwiese (actually a twin?)

Mother Helena died 21 June 1920 in Schoenwiese, probably due to birth complications
with her last 2 children

Father Kornelius went missing and likely died 1942

Wiens, Gerhard

Born 23 March 1880 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Baptized 31 May 1900 in Nikolaifeld, Yazykovo

Married **Katharina Koop** 10 February 1913 in Alexandrovsk

She was born 19 December 1890 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Children:

1. **Luise** - born 17 November 1913 in Einlage, to Canada with parents in 1923, married
Cornelius Penner 14 August 1938, 8 children, she died 2 November 1998,
Cornelius died 7 February 2000

2. **Anna** - born 5 April 1915 in Schoenwiese, to Canada with parents in 1923, never
married, died 7 December 1995 in Abbotsford, BC

3. **Peter** - born 28 February 1921 in Schoenwiese, to Canada with parents in 1923,
married Helen Rempel, 3 children, Peter died of stroke 31 January 1996

Gerhard was a land surveyor, having studied in Stelitz, Germany and Bergen, Switzerland

He worked in his profession in Arkadak, and at the electric power plant in Zaporozhye

There last 2 children were born in Zaporozhye, likely when he worked at the dam

In 1923 they migrated to Canada, first farming in Saskatchewan

1938 land surveyor for the Federal Government until he retired at age 73

Gerhard died 16 November 1956 in Yarrow, BC, Katharina died 22 April 1985 in Abbotsford

Wieler, Mr

Wieler, Mr

Wieler brothers built Alexandrabad in 1904 on the eastern bank of the Dnieper River

This was to be a health sanatorium, using the naturopathic techniques of Dr Heinrich Lahmann
of Germany

Industrialist Jacob H Niebuhr bought Alaeandrabad in 1910. He modernized the facilities in
1911

ESTATES UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF ALEXANDROVSK IN 1908

1. Alexandrabad - address Alexandrovsk, Ekaterinoslav, owned by Heinrich Nikolai Reimer,
399 dessiatines

2. Blumenort - Alexandrovsk Uezd, Natalino Volost

Owners: Jakob Jakob Martens 1886), Martens heirs (1899), Jakob Wilhelm Martens
(1914), 183 dessiatines, Martens actually lived in Markovka

ON COMBINES, LENIN AND STALIN

The Abram J Koop Factory was founded in 1864 in the Chortitza Colony, originally in Chortitza, but in time also having factories in Einlage and Alexandrovsk (Zaporozhye). When it observed its fiftieth anniversary in 1914, it was the second largest of the Mennonite industries in Russia, doing what Mennonites did best, producing agricultural machinery. Success of the company in part was the innovative engineering of its employees. Peter Dyck was a German trained engineer working for the firm, as well as Gerhard Hamm, Kornelius Pauls and others.

After the Revolution and the Bolshevik takeover, the Hildebrand, Lepp and Wallmann and Koop factories were nationalized, and combined to form one huge conglomerate "Factory Kommunar." Many of the employees remained, and in particular many of the group of engineers stayed on with the new administration. Chief engineer Peter Dyck, as well as Gerhard Hamm worked on various projects such as designing and producing a combine. They were successful in this enterprise, and after examination by Michael I Kalinin, the group of engineers and the factory were awarded the Order of Lenin on 3 September 1931.

But fame is fleeting. On 8 April 1937, 11 of the leading people of the factory were accused of being enemies of the people, were arrested and jailed in Zaporozhye. The accused were sentenced on 16 September, and executed 17 September 1937 in Dnepropetrovsk.

Eventually both Peter Dyck and Gerhard Hamm were "rehabilitated." There had not been enough evidence to convict them.

Hildegard Epp of Winnipeg, the youngest child of Peter Dyck, has ferreted out the story of her father, and has visited the places where he lived and worked. Marguerita Bergmann of Victoria, British Columbia, the youngest child of Gerhard Hamm, has also researched the story of her father, and has come up with enough documentation to put his picture and records onto the Pyramid of Pictures in Room 9 of the Dmitri Yavornitzki Historical Museum of Dnepropetrovsk



Hildegard Epp and Marguerita Bergmann among the tourists looking at the model of the combine designed by their fathers, winning them the Order of Lenin in 1931

PETER JOHANN DYCK

1889-1937

Born 3 June 1884 in Osterwick, Chortitza Colony

Parents Johann Dyck and Anna Niebuhr, both born in Kronstal

His father was a farmer, as well as a wagon builder

Peter was a tall man, almost seven feet

His father sent him to Germany to study at a technical institute in Zwickau, Saxony

Finished about 1910, worked another year in Germany to get experience, then back to Ukraine about 1911

Married Elsbeth Wilhelm in Germany in 1912

Children: Herbert (1913), Margaretha (1915), Peter (1918), Walter (1924), Hildegard (1926)

Worked as engineer for the A J Koop Factory in Schoenwiese

Peter continued on with the factory when it was taken over by the government, and renamed "Factory Kommunar." He was the chief engineer

He was a very competent engineer, but also got along well with his co-workers

Was sent to Germany in 1925 to assess some of the American agricultural technology

Together with his friend Gerhard Hamm, Kornelius Pauls and others, developed the first combine produced in the Soviet Union in 1929

For this they and the factory, after examination by Kalinin himself, received the Order of Lenin 3 September 1931

They were decorated for "exceptional achievements in the development of grain combines and the organization of their mass production." Peter continued to work on additions and modifications to the combine to improve its efficiency, for example "shields and beaters" which were added in 1932 to improve the winter crop yield.

Peter continued to monitor the efficiency of the factory; photographic records of the average work day showed that time was wasted in various factory functions. Peter worked to correct these

In October 1934 Peter reported that by 11 October the factory had delivered 18,507 units, on some days producing up to 60 combines

In his position Peter was allowed to build a fine house in Einlage as well as have a few holidays in southern resorts

On 8 April 1937, 11 of the leading people from the factory were accused of being enemies of the people, were arrested and jailed in Zaporozhye. Specifically Peter was accused of "unreasonably spreading contra-views for an adverse and harmful organization."

Wife Elsbeth and daughter Hildegard saw him in the jail in Zaporozhye on one occasion, after that he was no longer there

The prisoners were sentenced on 16 September, and executed 17 September 1937 in Dnepropetrovsk

On 11 September Elsbeth was also arrested and sentenced to ten years and exiled to Siberia

Children Walter and Hildegard were taken to a "home" which was basically an orphanage for children whose parents had been arrested

As of 6 March 1958 Peter was officially "rehabilitated"



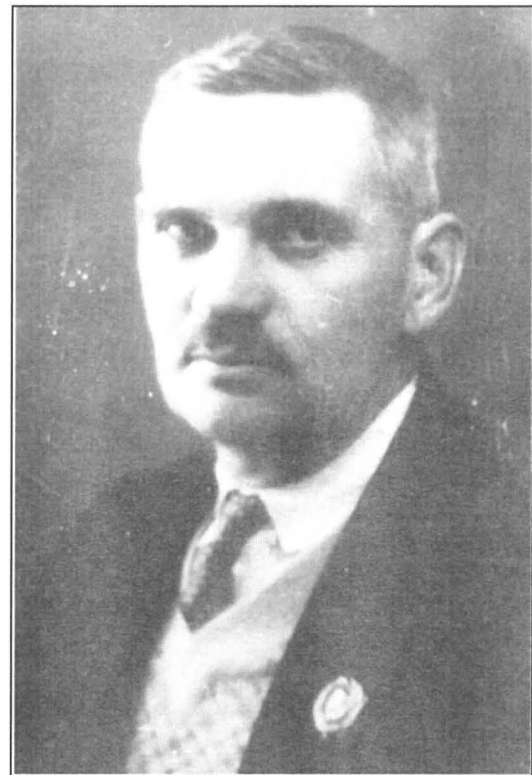
Peter Dyck and wife Elsbeth



Peter Dyck family in 1931. Children l to r: Walter
Hildegard, Peter



The Peter Dyck house in Einlage



Peter Dyck in 1936

GERHARD CHRISTIAN HAMM

1883-1937

Born 22 April 1883 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Parents Christian Hamm and Maria M Hamm. Maria was her husband's second cousin, and a descendant of Johann Cornies. They were married on 15 October 1872

In 1899 Gerhard worked in a factory in Halbstadt

From 1905-1907 he studied at a technical institute in Germany

Returning from Germany he worked as an engineer in Halbstadt, then Berdyansk

In 1909 he started work in the Abram J Koop Factory of Schoenwiese as a design engineer

Married Katharina Rempel: 2 children, Christian Gerhard (1916), Katharina (1918-1920)

Wife died 1920

Married Anna Koop 9 July 1923: 1 child, Marguerite (1926), who married Wilhelm Bergmann

Continued to work for the factory when it was taken over by the government and renamed "Factory Kommunar"

Combined with his work, he also played an active role in the district committee of the Union of Metal Workers

In 1923 was awarded a gold watch for outstanding performance

In 1930 he was sent to Germany and the United States to gather information and experience in the conveyer system which would be an improvement in combine design

Together with his friend Peter Dyck, Kornelius Pauls and others at the Factory Kommunar worked as design engineer to produce the first combine in the Soviet Union in 1929

For this they and the factory, after examination by Kalinin himself, received the Order of Lenin 3 September 1931

On 8 April 1937, 11 of the leading people from the factory were accused of being enemies of the people, were arrested and jailed in Zaporozhye

Specific accusation against Gerhard was that he took part in a counter-revolutionary diversion organization

When the arresting officials came, they first asked Gerhard to hand over the Order of Lenin. That then made him an ordinary citizen

For some time Anna was able to visit him every week to bring food and clean underwear

Gerhard was sentenced on 16 September, and executed 17 September in Dnepropetrovsk

Gerhard's wife, Anna was also arrested and sentenced to five years exile in Siberia; she had to stay in the area another ten years because she was German

On 6 May 1958 Gerhard was declared "rehabilitated." There had not been sufficient evidence to convict him

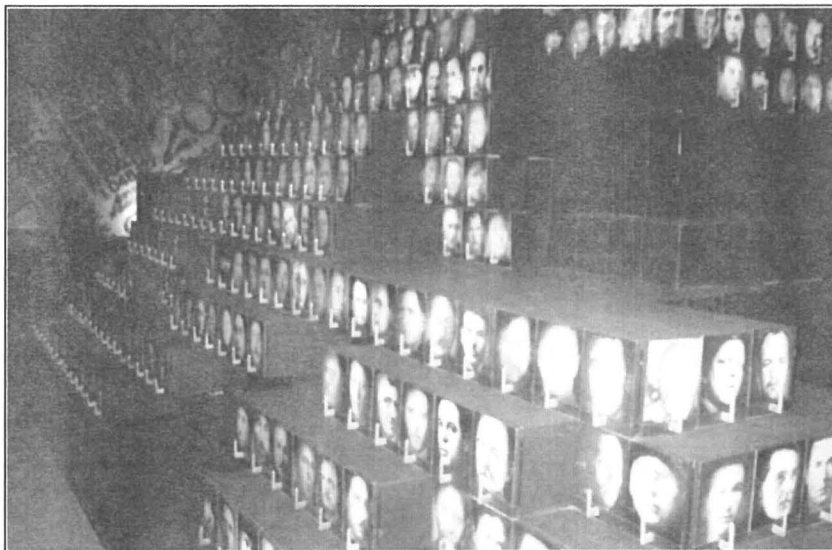
Gerhard's picture is now displayed in the pyramid of pictures of people who have suffered atrocities at the hands of the Soviets under Stalin, found in the Dmitri Yavornitzki Historical Museum in Dnepropetrovsk



Gerhard Christian Hamm



The Gerhard Hamm File, Room 9, Dmitri Yavornitski Historical Museum



Room 9,
Dmitri Yavornitzki
Historical Museum
Dnepropetrovsk
The Pyramid of Death

Among these pictures is
that of Gerhard Hamm

DAVID JOHANN KLASSEN

(1899-1990)

(From information provided by granddaughter Helene Bergen and Viktor Fast)
Biography published in *Diese Steine*, pages 488-89 and in *Wasserstroeme in der Oede*
pages 419-426

Born 22 March 1899 in Fuerstenwerder, Molotschna

Parents Johann Klassen and Anna Penner

Family moved to Rosenort, Molotschna, in 1908

In 1917, during a severe illness, David accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour

In August 1918 he was baptized in the Juschanlee River by B B Janz, pastor of the local Tiege congregation, and joined the Mennonite Brethren Church

He started working in the church, teaching Sunday School, in time directing the youth choir and singing in the church choir

David very much wanted to go to the Tchongrau Bible School in the Crimea, but it was unfortunately closed down in the spring of 1924

On 13 December 1924 he started working at the mental hospital Bethania which was located at Alt-Kronsweide of the Chortitza Colony. Until 1927 he led a choir at Bethania

In May 1927 the area where the hospital stood was flooded by the reservoir created by the new Dneproges Hydro-Electric Dam project

A new general hospital was built on higher ground by the Soviet government; David continued to work there until 1936

On 12 May 1929 he married Sara Hamm in the Lichtenau Church. She was born 20 March 1898 in Lichtenau, Molotschna. Her parents were Hermann H Hamm and Elisabeth Wiebe

They lived in Einlage, in the new house David had built

Since at first they had no children, in January 1934 they adopted a girl,

1. Anna Wiens - born 19 February 1931, daughter of friends of theirs, she married Herbert Bergen 20 November 1955, had at least 2 boys, David and Nikolai

After that the Klassens had two sons of their own:

2. David - born 20 February 1935, married Frieda Molkobekayo
3. Ernst - born 3 August 1936, married Liese Wiens 8 May 1960, killed in an accident September 1981, leaving his wife with 15 children, a severe blow to the rest of the family

The night of 7-8 April 1936 David was arrested, and taken to the prison in Zaporozhye

On 26-27 August he was sentenced to seven years retraining and labour camp for "Anti-Soviet activities under the guise of religion." During his imprisonment he was, most of the time, able to do medical type work. For some time he had a New Testament with him. He knew that in time it would be taken from him, so he memorized many passages

His sentence was actually completed in 1943, but because of the war he was not released until 12 December 1946

Sara, in the mean time, had been sentenced to ten years imprisonment in July 1941

The "orphaned" children stayed with relatives, and together with them were deported to Kazakhstan

After his release David went to his orphaned children in Beloglinovka, Kustanai Region, northern Kazakhstan, employed as a first aid worker

There was no local church, but David discussed the Word of God in various homes in the village, also organized a choir

On 1 September 1949 he and five others were arrested. He was interrogated on 91 different occasions, night or day. After five months of investigation all six were sentenced to 25 years imprisonment, again for "Anti-Soviet activities under the guise of religion."

In 1952 Sara was released; she came to her children, and with them moved to Karaganda, Kazakhstan in 1955. Here she found fellowship with other believers

In August 1950 David was transferred to another camp, where he found other Christians who had also been imprisoned. David composed hymns and poems which not only consoled himself, but also his fellow sufferers

March 1953, after the death of Stalin, David's case was reviewed and the sentence reduced to ten years. Even so, in 1955 he was declared an invalid, and was released to his family on 18 October. In Karaganda he found many believers to worship with

David was soon asked to perform weddings, to speak at funerals and baptisms; he travelled on foot, on donkey, with horse drawn wagon, automobile or train, all over Kazakhstan, Siberia and central Asia to visit newly formed fellowships

He also wrote out sermons which were widely distributed to groups of believers

In May 1957 David and Sara joined the newly organized German Mennonite church in Karaganda. David's energy and experience brought the church into the Mennonite Brethren fellowship. His sermon, pointing out that the rudder of a ship must be solid, not made of rubber, in order to reach the goal, was well remembered

On 16 June 1957 David, as well as Franz Ediger and Abram Friesen were dedicated as ministers of the church

David was elected elder on 12 September 1957, a position he accepted with some reluctance. He based his acceptance on Jeremiah 20:7 "...thou art stronger than I, and thou hast prevailed..."

The local Communist party considered David dangerous enough to print derogatory articles about him in the local newspapers, for example the article in *Sozialistitscheskaya Karaganda* on 10 September 1960. This was basically hate literature against David and Christianity

David continued to lead the congregation through increasingly difficult times. He was well liked, and helped the church to grow

In August 1962 Heinrich Zorn and Heinrich Wiebe were arrested, followed by David in September. At a court hearing 11 and 12 December David vigorously defended the church. As leader of the congregation he was sentenced to three years' hard labour. On 29 December he was sent to the Karabas Camp, where the regimen was "particularly strict." Here he wore prison garb, could receive no packages, and could write only one letter a month. Here also David depended on his inner resources: he composed poems, and sang the hymns and reviewed the Bible verses he knew by memory.

On 30 April 1965 news from Alma Ata came, that through the application of his son Ernst,

David was considered to be rehabilitated, and should be released. He headed for home that evening.

Back in Karaganda he was asked to again assume the position as elder. This time he refused, but continued to be on the Church Council. He also worked on a commission helping to reconcile some difficulties with the Baptist Union

Winter of 1970-1971 he developed glaucoma of his left eye, and 17 May 1973 the eye was surgically removed

In 1979 he lost the sight in the right eye, making him totally blind. It was a severe loss, but even so he and his wife often sang hymns together

Because of the difficulty in caring for themselves, in 1980 the Klassens moved to the home of their adopted daughter, Anna Bergen. David now preached very seldom, but many people came to request spiritual help or just to visit

In September 1981 son Ernst died in an accident, leaving behind wife Elisabeth and 15 children. At the funeral David acknowledged that God makes no mistakes, but that he still wished that God had taken his own life instead.

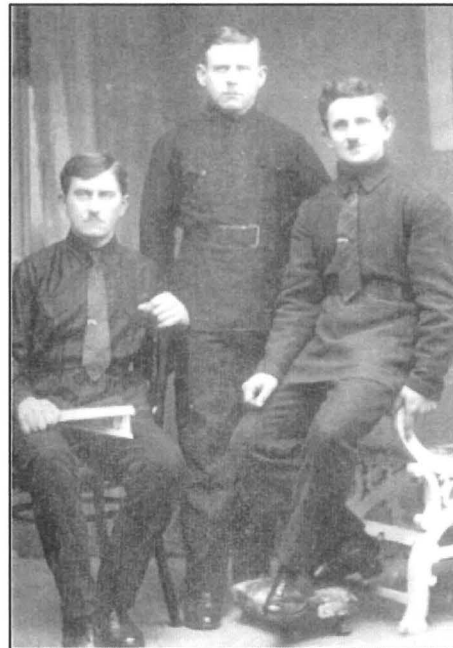
On 13 March 1986 Sara died. David was very lonely, but the many hymns and Bible verses he had memorized were a comfort to him.

In July 1989 he lived in the home of his son David

In August 1990 this true servant of God died at the age of 91. He could then "see the one whom he loved, the one whom he served."



David and Sara Klassen in 1929



David Klassen, on the right, while working at Bethania



The Klassen Family. Standing l to r: wife Sara, daughter Anna, sitting l to r: Ernst, David, then son David



First aid worker during his imprisonment

Ministry in many places



Thanksgiving celebration at Saran, near Karaganda, David Klassen in the middle



David baptizing a new believer



David Klassen (right) with friend Daniel Friesen in Novopavlovka, Kirghizia

Der große kommende Advent!

Budigt von Be D Joh Klassen. Virgil

„Siehe, er kommt mit den Wolken, u er werden
Ihn sehen alle Augen die Ihn zerstoehen haben; und
werden heulen alle Geschlechter der Erde. Ja Amen.“
(Off. 1 7.)

Zeit Christi Geburt befindet sich die Menschheit
zwischen zwei Adventen, zwischen seinem Kommen in Niedrig-
keit u seinem Kommen in Herrlich-keit. Dort kam Er als
Kind u fand sein Beth in einer Krippe... auf das erschau-
denen die da sitzen in Finsternis u. Schatten des Todes, u
richte unsre Füße auf dem Weg des Friedens (Luk. 1 9).
ward Er doch arm um eurer willen auf das ihr durch
seine Armut reich würdet. (2 Kor. 8 9.) Hier dagegen
beim zweiten Advent wird Er kommen als Herr aller
Herren u. als König aller Könige. Die Zeit zwischen
diesen zwei Adventen nennt die Schrift den Tag
des Heils d. h. der gnädigen Heil anbietung Gottes

“The Great coming Advent,” sermon prepared by David Klassen
on the basis of Revelation 1:7. To be circulated among the groups
of believers in Russia



David enjoyed hymns, poems
and Bible verses



Article which appeared in Karaganda paper on
10 September 1960, basically hate literature
against David Klassen and Christianity



The expanded Klassen Family. Back row, l to r
David Klassen, Ernst Klassen, Herbert Bergen
front row l to r: Frieda Klassen, Sara (holding
David Bergen), David (holding Nikolai Bergen)
and Anna Bergen



David at the funeral of Sara in March 1986, with his children,
grandchildren and great-grandchildren

Niebuhr Family



Justina Niebuhr (nee Dyck)
1836-1883



Hermann Abraham Niebuhr
1830-1906



Daughters of Hermann Niebuhr
Standing: Katharina
Sitting l to r: Justina, Anna, Maria



The family of Jakob H Niebuhr. Back row l to r:
Jenny (Huebert), Lena (Wiebe), Justina von Kampen
and daughter Irene, Abram, Maria (Klassen)
Sitting, l to r: Jakob, Katya Boettcher, Mrs Niebuhr sen.,
Hermann, Jakob H Niebuhr



Justina Lepp, wife of Johann G
Lepp, daughter of Hermann A
Niebuhr



Justina Niebuhr (1891-1960),
daughter of Jakob H Niebuhr

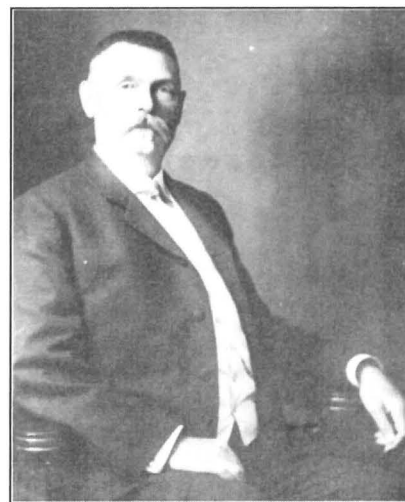


Jakob Hermann Niebuhr
1862-1932

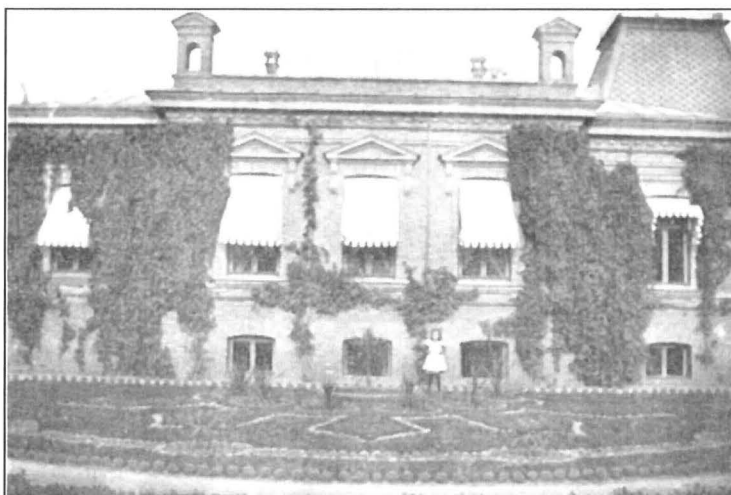
Lepp Family



Hermann J Lepp with wife Olga (nee Janzen). He was a patent engineer with Lepp & Wallmann



Johann G Lepp, grandson of Peter Lepp, and general manager of Lepp & Wallmann



Johann G Lepp residence in Schoenwiese



Garden of Johann G Lepp in Schoenwiese

Wallmann Family



Andreas Wallmann I



Andreas Wallmann II



Chortitza Volost Council of 1892
Andreas A Wallmann II seated in
front



Andreas Wallmann and his bride
Helene Schroeder in 1906



Andreas Wallmann and wife
Helene

Koop Family



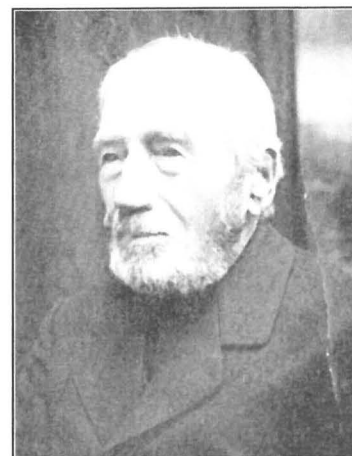
Jakob A Koop and his bride
Katharina Neufeld on their
wedding day



Abraham Jakob Koop and wife
Katharina (nee Paetkau), original
founder of the Koop factory



J A Koop, manager
of factory in Chortitza



Abraham Jakob Koop



Abraham A Koop
son of founder

Janzen Family (Brewer)



Johann A Janzen (1922-1943)
Died fighting partisans



Maria Unger
(1896-1994)



Abraham Janzen (1890-1937)

Johann was the son of Abraham and Maria



Kornelius Jakob Hildebrand with wife Anna (nee Epp), the original founder of the Hildebrand factory



Kornelius Hildebrand in his original workshop in Chortitza



Kornelius Kornelius Hildebrand and wife Margaretha (nee Loewen), son of original owner, and partner in the business

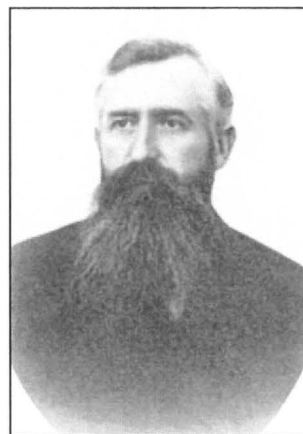
Hildebrand Family



Abraham Dyck and wife Susanna, partner in the Niebuhr business



Olga Toews (nee Badowsky)
Her family had a business in Zaporozhye



Johann J Fast

MENNONITE INSTITUTIONS

Frisian Kronsweide Mennonite Church

Originally the Schoenwiese Mennonite Church erected its building in 1862

It was a branch of the Frisian Kronsweide Mennonite Church

After the destruction of Neu-Kronsweide, it became the centre of this congregation

Andeas Vogt (1854-1914) was one of the leading ministers

Johann P Klassen was elder from 1907-1923

Klassen then migrated to Canada, and was elder of the Schoenwieser Mennonite Church in Winnipeg from its beginning in 1926

After 1930 the Russian Schoenwiese building was used as a theatre



Elder Johann Klassen and wife. He was elder of the Schoenwiese Mennonite Church in Russia, then later also in Winnipeg



Kronsweide Schoenwiese Church building



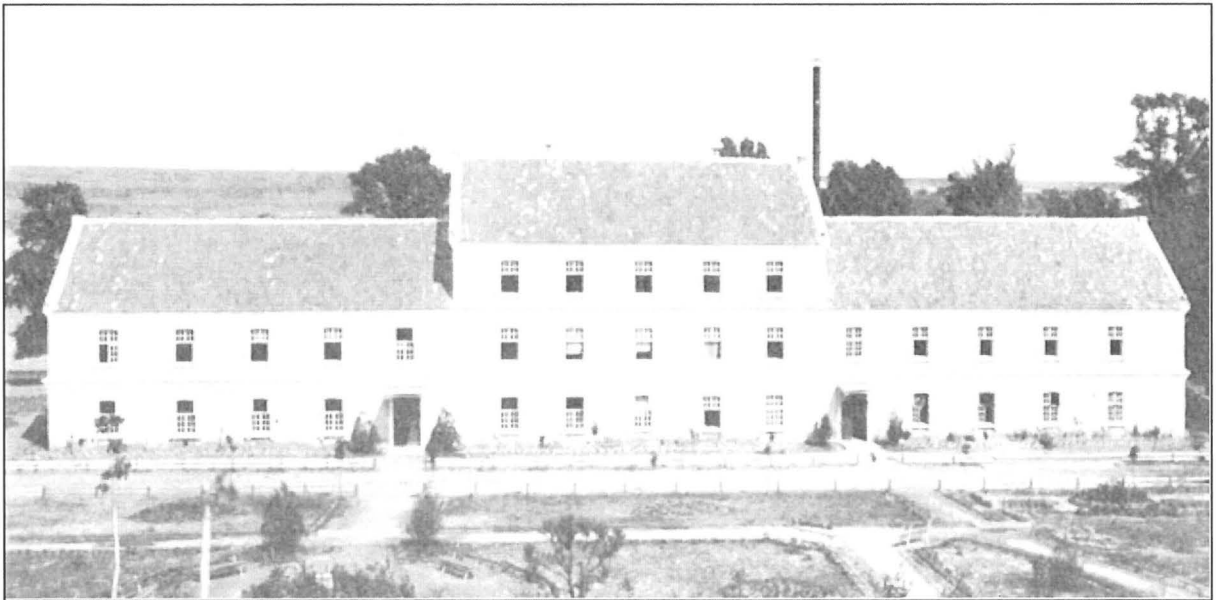
Church building built by the Koops for the *Allianzgemeinde*

ALEXANDRABAD

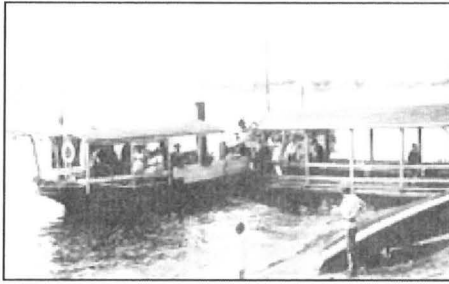
Alexandrabad, a private sanatorium, was first constructed by some Wieler brothers in 1904. It was built at a picturesque spot on the bank of the Dniepr River, across from the Old Colony village of Einlage. Modeled after a sanatorium in Dresden, Germany, it advocated community life, healing and exercising in nature, eating dark bread and other nutritional foods as well as wearing loose fitting clothing. It followed the treatment regimen advocated by naturopath Dr Heinrich Lahmann.

Industrialist Jacob H Niebuhr purchased Alexandrabad in 1910, and in 1911 proceeded to expand and modernize it. Both health and recreational activities were available. There was a dock on the Dniepr River to provide access. The main building had individual guest rooms, a kitchen and dining room, an X-ray and electrical room, as well as a bathing and massage area. The bathing could be with steam, carbonic acid or other special formulas. Special diets included vegetarian meals. Up to four doctors provided treatment for a wide variety of ailments. The surrounding park area was dotted with numerous small buildings, including cottages for those guests wishing to have more privacy. At times, in the evenings, an orchestra played in the park area.

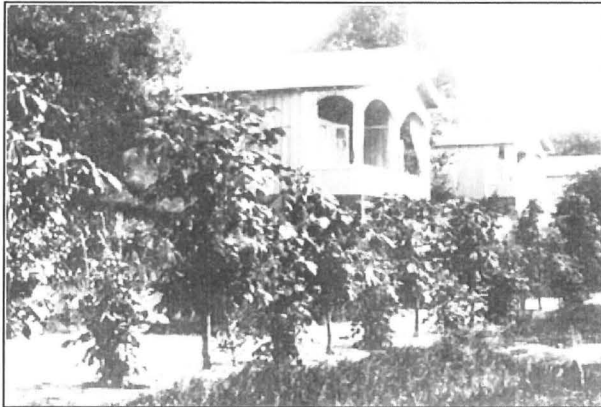
Some time before onset of World War I Niebuhr passed on the ownership of the facility to his son-in-law, Wilhelm Boettcher, who was a German citizen. After the onset of the war all German owned properties were confiscated, so Alexandrabad was taken over by the city of Alexandrovsk, and was converted into a military hospital. Apparently it ceased to operate during the Russian Civil War. After the construction of the Dneproges hydroelectric dam (1927-1932) it disappeared under the waters of the Dniepr River.



Alexandrabad main building about 1912



Alexandrabad Dock 1910



Cottages at Alexandrabad



Dining Room 1910

Sanatorium Alexandrabad

am Dnjepr bei Alexandrowsk

Ausgerüstet nach Dr. Lahmanns System
mit den neuesten Naturheilmitteln:

Licht, Luft- u. Sonnenbäder, Wasserheilverfahren, Dampf-
bäder, Kohlensäure Bäder u. dergl.

Elektrische Heilmittel: Faradisation, Galvanisa-
tion, Franklinische Kopf-
schläge, Bierjellenbad, Vibration und Röntgenapparat,
Massage, allgemeine und spezielle bei Frauenkrankheiten.

Behandelt werden: Nervenkrankheiten, Erholungsbedürftige,
müde, abgebrannte Chroniker, Gelähmte, Herz-, Magen-
und Nierenkrankheiten; ferner Frauenkrankheiten, Stoffwechsel-
erkrankungen: Gicht, Rheumatismus aller Art, Zucker-
krankheit, Blutarmut, Gleichnucht u. dergl.

Spezieller Magenkrankentisch!

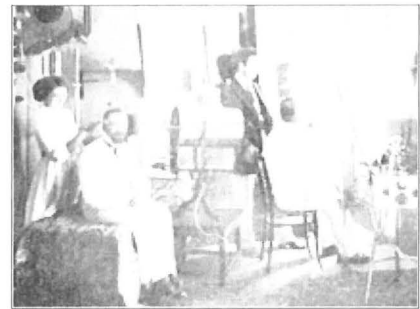
Vegetarischer Tisch!

Die Anstalt ist Sommer und Winter geöffnet.

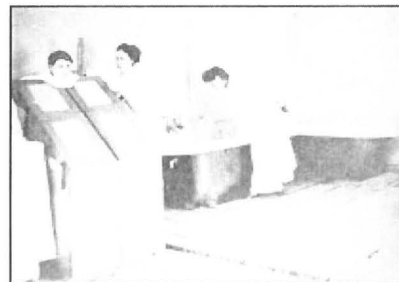
Prospekt auf Wunsch gratis und franko!

Adresse für Briefe und Depeschen: Alexandrowsk, Gouv.
Jekaterinoflaw, Sanatorium Alexandrabad.

Advertising in 1913



Electrical and X-ray room 1910



Steam room 1910

MENNONITE BUSINESSES

Bock, Gerhard

Owner of a stonemason and a carpenter shop in Alexandrovsk in the 1870s

Dyck, Abraham

He was on city council of Alexandrovsk 1907-1912

He was very busy, so he missed many of the meetings. He was reprimanded for this
Part owner of Niebuhr and Company. In 1907 the Dycks owned 284 of the 1,994 shares,
in 1914 it was 270 of the 1,742 shares

Dyck, Abram P

Bank director in Schoenwiese

Dyck, Nikolaus

Owner of a blacksmith shop in Alexandrovsk in the 1870s

Hamm, Jacob

Owner of a mill, somewhere near Alexandrovsk

Also was a real estate dealer and owned a movie theatre in Chortitza

Harder, Abraham

Wife Margarita

In 1898 he built a fabric factory

Production exceeded 18,000R per year

Margarita Harder inherited a textile factory (likely that of her husband), and was in charge
of its production after 1904

Hildebrand, Kornelius Jakob

Kornelius Hildebrand began as an apprentice to Peter Lepp, then established a clock-making
business

Built his own plough and treadmill, then also built them for others

When 3-share ploughs became popular, he built many

Officially became established as a company in 1878

Originally the factory was in Chortitza, then in 1892 a factory was also opened in Schoenwiese

On 1 June 1902 the trading house, K Hildebrand's Sons and Priess was founded

It owned cast iron and machinery factories in Schoenwiese and Chortitza

Annual production of the Schoenwiese factory was 80,000R

Peter and Kornelius Hildebrand and Peter Priess were the principal owners by then

By 1905 the annual profits of the trading house were 9,000R, and annual production 116,000R

Awards at the agricultural exhibition in London in 1908, and in Ekaterinoslav in 1910

In 1914 Chortitza employed 80 workers, Schoenwiese 100, with an annual output valued at
500,000R

The factory specialty was reapers and drills, sold as far away as Siberia

For subsequent story see: World War I, Russian Revolution, Civil War and Bolshevik

Takeover

Isaak, D P

D P Isaak, of Schoenwiese, near Alexandrovsk

Handled books and writing materials
Carried all the materials produced by *Raduga* of Halbstadt
Price list available "gratis"
Advertised in *Christlicher Familienkalender* 1911, 1912

Isaak, Peter

Owner of a steam-powered flour mill in Alexandrovsk in the 1870s

Jantzen, Jakob

Owner of a brick and dairy plant in Alexandrovsk by 1895
Wife Katharina was in charge of the dairy plant

Janzen, Andreas

By 1867 one of the five Mennonite families living in Alexandrovsk
Among the first to construct a flour mill in Alexandrovsk
He owned 2 businesses valued at 4,500R

Janzen, Heinrich, Brewery

Originally started by Heinrich Jakob Janzen (1811-1887), established the brewery in 1863
Then operated by Heinrich Janzen (1849-1905), Heinrich Janzen 1877-1931)
Located on Bierbrauer Street, initially in Schoenwiese, after amalgamation in Zaporozhye
About 1907 it was called G G Janzen Brewery (likely German would be H H Janzen)

The company won medals at expositions in Paris in 1907, and in Marseille
and London in 1908

On the letterhead announced that they produced lemonade, fruit drinks, sparkling (carbonated)
water and beer. They had the best prices ever

Telephone number 31; Telegraph address - Alexandrovsk Brewery Janzen

To send by rail - Alexandrovsk South Railway Station

The Janzen house was immediately adjacent to the brewery

The brewery was probably taken over by the government by the early 1920s

The brewery is in operation (2007), now called "Zaporozhye Brewery Number 1"

Janzen, Jakob

By 1867 one of the first five Mennonite families living in Alexandrovsk
Among the first to construct a flour mill in Alexandrovsk
He owned 2 businesses valued at 7,500R
Owned a paint store in 1870
Owned a grocery store in 1870

Janzen, Jakob

Owned an inn in Alexandrovsk during the 1870s

Janzen, Kornelius Kornelius

Bank Director in Alexandrovsk some time before 1920

Janzen, Victor

By 1895 owned a steam-powered flour mill
At that time five of the eight steam-powered mills in the city were owned by Mennonites

Janzen, Wilhelm

By 1895 owned a steam-powered flour mill
At that time five of the eight steam-powered mills in the city were owned by Mennonites

Klassen, Abraham

In 1912 had a warehouse selling agricultural machinery

Advertised in the *Christlicher Familienkalender*

Sold motors, threshing machines, binders, grass mowers, various MacCormik machines, sewing machines, linoleum

Klassen, Bernard

By 1895 owned a steam-powered flour mill

At that time five of the eight steam-powered mills in the city were owned by Mennonites

Kommunar Factory

After the Bolshevik takeover the three largest agricultural implement factories were amalgamated into one large conglomerate named Factory Kommunar

The three companies were Lepp and Wallmann, K Hildebrand's Sons and Priess, A J Koop Agricultural Machines and Tools

This company, with chief engineer Peter Dyck, produced the first harvester combine designed in the Soviet Union in 1929. The engineers and the company received the Order of Lenin in 1931 for this achievement

The factory had at least 6 female technical designers or technologists in 1936: Kaethe Koop, Caea Klassen, Olga Martens, Anna Priess, Emma Weissnar, Helene Wiebe

Koop, Abraham

Abraham Jakob Koop was first an apprentice in the workshop and factory of Peter Lepp in 1856, first learning to be a watchmaker

He opened a blacksmith shop in 1864, initially producing grinding machines (choppers) and iron parts for windmills

In 1874 built his own foundry, in 1877 had to enlarge his buildings

In 1877 he introduced first steam engine to power the factory; no longer needed horses

Produced ploughs, cleaning mills and binders, especially binders; in 1877 produced 32 binders, in 1887 built 600

Built another factory in Schoenwiese near Alexandrovsk in 1888

In 1889 this factory produced 50 binders, in 1903 it was 3,000

"A J Koop Agricultural Machines and Tools" was founded in 1888

In 1903 the J A Friesen factory was purchased in Einlage

Sons Peter and David moved to Einlage to manage this factory

To solve the problem of different tempers required by different machine parts, Koop and Hoelker built a tempering factory in 1907

In 1908 the factories produced goods worth 610,000R; at that time there were 288 workers in Schoenwiese, 100 in Einlage, 81 in Chortitza

In 1910 the company had 80 shares owned by: Koops (74), Niebuhrs (2), and others (4)

Total capital in 1910 was 2,000,000R

In 1911 employed a total of 800 workers

The firm was interested in the spiritual welfare of its employees, building a church for the *Allianz-Gemeinde* in Schoenwiese

In 1914 the Koop factories received 8 medals at agricultural exhibitions

At the fiftieth anniversary the factory had produced 186,560 units of agricultural equipment; it

was noted to be the second largest Mennonite industry in Russia
United with the Gan's factory of Odessa, then in January 1913 united with "Elvorty" of
Elisabethgrad, founding the company "Harvest." It distributed Koop machines in Europe
and Asia.

For subsequent story see: World War I, Russian Revolution, Civil War and Bolshevik
Takeover

Koop and Hoelker

In 1907 Abraham Koop and August Helker founded a cast iron factory to supply the needs
of their factories and other neighbouring enterprises

In 1910 produced 17,900 pounds of cast iron, valued at 113,818R

For subsequent story see: World War I, Russian Revolution, Civil War and Bolshevik
Takeover

Krahn, Gerhard

Initially, in 1870, his business was worth only 3,000R

By 1895 owned a steam-powered flour mill

At that time five of the eight steam-powered mills in the city were owned by Mennonites

Krahn, Mr

By 1895 was part owner, together with Mr Kroeger, of a grain trading company

Kroeger, Mr

By 1895 was part owner, together with Mr Krahn, of a grain trading company

Lepp & Wallmann

Peter Peter Lepp (1817-1871) began to make clocks in Chortitza, usually with two
apprentices, who at one time were Kornelius Hildebrand and Abraham J Koop

Because of poor eyesight he branched out into larger machines

About 1850 started repairing agricultural machinery to supplement his income

He began producing treadmills, and in 1853 built his first threshing machine, selling it to a
large estate owner

In 1860 he built his own foundry, so he could supply his own parts; he manufactured cast
iron wheels and shafts

In 1861 more estate owners were attracted to his work, but he faced stiff competition from
Britain; he overcame this by guaranteeing his products and providing good service

In 1863 received a very positive evaluation at an agricultural exposition in Simferopol

In 1867 he produced 115 threshing machines, 50 winnowers, 175 iron horse rakes, 125 chaff
cutters and 12 reapers

In 1869 received a diploma at an exhibition in Odessa

For some time his eldest son Gerhard worked with his father, but later left to form a different
partnership

Second child, daughter Katharina, married Andreas Wallmann

Peter died 30 August 1871

Firm inherited by two sons, Peter and Abram. After he graduated from *Realschule* and some
business training in 1879, also grandson Johann Gerhard Lepp

In 1880 Andreas Wallmann, brother-in-law of the elder Peter Lepp, joined the firm; he
contributed considerable capital to the operation

The firm was then renamed Lepp & Wallmann

In the 1880s much of the business of Chortitza village was transferred to Schoenwiese,

Lepp & Wallmann transferred in 1885; in 1900 it opened a factory in Pavlograd

It then owned factories in Chortitza, Schoenwiese and Pavlograd

In 1889 the firm employed 250 men; that year it produced 1,200 reapers, 220 threshing machines, 500 winnowers, 15 steam threshers and 15 boilers

From 1882-1890 the firm received medals at agricultural exhibitions in Moscow (1882),

Kharkov (1887), Simferopol (1888), Bessarabia (1889) and Kherson (1890)

Grandson Johann G Lepp (1861-1920) continued as one of the principal owners of the company and played an important part in the management

On 3 July 1903 achieved the status of "trade and commercial joint-stock company"

At the time of its founding the capital of the company was 1,200,000R and output was 900,000R per annum

Total value was 1,150,000R

Shares were distributed between the successors of Peter Lepp and Andreas Wallmann and representatives of the Niebuhr family who had married into the Lepp "dynasty."

Became well known throughout Russia

Was the largest enterprise in Russia in the production of agricultural machinery

Annual production of the Schoenwiese plant alone was 220,000R

In 1903 the company had 1,197 shares owned by: Lepps (552), Wallmanns (320), Niebuhrs (3), and others (22). Total capital was 1,200,000R.

By 1911-1912 the company had 700 workers

In 1915 the company had 2,400 shares owned by: Lepps (1,700), Wallmanns (590), Niebuhrs (66) and others (20). Total capital was 2,400,000R

From 1912 to 1915 the following women were actively involved in managing the production of their enterprises, held technical positions at the Lepp & Wallmann factory and received wages: Maria Hermann Lepp, Justina Hermann Lepp, Eva Heinrich Lepp

Workers at the factory were provided with health insurance

The firm built a hospital (in 1909) and housing accommodations for the workers, and a school for the children

The firm supported the Mechanical College of Alexandrovsk to secure an education for technical specialists

"P Lepp Grant" was given to the best students of the Alexandrovsk College whose parents were workers at the factory

From 1905 to 1910 the profits increased from 100,617 to 224,991R

For subsequent story see: World War I, Russian Revolution, Civil War and Bolshevik Takeover

In 1923-1924 most of the Lepp family migrated to Canada, thereby avoiding the persecution, arrest and imprisonment which would undoubtedly have awaited them

Loewen, Andreas

By 1867 one of the five Mennonite families living in Alexandrovsk

Among the first to construct a flour mill in Alexandrovsk

His enterprise was valued at 2,000R

Niebuhr Bank

Established in 1904 in Chortitza

Initiated by Jakob Hermann Niebuhr to help finance some of the business enterprises

Niebuhr, Hermann; after 1895 called H A Niebuhr and Co

In 1880 constructed a steam-powered flour mill near the Lozovaya-Sevastopol Railway Line which was running through the city

Initial cost of constructing the mill was 24,000R. It was eventually valued at 131,000R

By 1895 five of the eight steam-powered mills in the city were owned by Mennonites

The H A Niebuhr and Co trading house was founded in 1895

Owners were two related family dynasties, the Niebuhrs and the Dycks

Some of the owners were related to the Lepp, Wallmann and Koop families

With extension of the Ekaterinaslav Railway Company line into Schoenwiese, Niebuhr constructed new mills both in Schoenwiese and Alexandrovsk

In 1898 Niebuhr advantageously purchased a new mill in Alexandrovsk. The owner had been unable to survive the pressure of declining world prices. It was semi-automatic, and geared for quality production.

Early twentieth century the firm owned 3 mills

2 in Schoenwiese, annual production valued at 541,000R

1 in Alexandrovsk annual production of 225,800R

In 1906 Hermann Niebuhr was wounded while being robbed in his home, died 2 days later

Thought to involve one of his own employees

Thereafter the firm was managed by his son and successor, Jakob H Niebuhr

In 1906 the company owned 10 mills

4 in Chortitza, built in 1872, 1875, 1894, 1894

1 in Nieder-Chortitza built in 1869

3 in Schoenwiese, built in 1881, 1886, and one bought in 1897

2 in Alexandrovsk, bought in 1898, and built in 1906

By 1907 transformed into a joint-stock company, at the time owning 11 mills

In 1907 the company had 1,994 shares owned by: Niebuhrs (647), Koops (469), Dycks (284), Lepps (237), Wallmanns (237), and others (120). Total capital was 1,994,000R

In 1914 the company had 1,742 shares owned by: Niebuhrs (674), Koops (464), Dycks (270), Lepps (286), and others (42). Total capital was 2,000,000R

In 1915, after amalgamation of several mills, there were 8

The Niebuhr mills had a doctor present at all times, and medications for the workers were free.

In 1915 hospital and medical expenses, costing 7,206R were covered

Beginning of World War I they milled 1,962,000 pounds of wheat and 175,000 pounds of rye

By 1914 exported to Finland, Turkey, Greece, Sudan and Java.

For subsequent story see: World War I, Russian Revolution, Civil War and Bolshevik

Takeover

Peters, Johann

Owner of a blacksmith shop in Alexandrovsk in the 1870s

Petkau, J

By 1895 owner of a grain storage facility

Siemens, Johann

Owner of a windmill in Alexandrovsk in the 1870s

Tavern

Located on Datschnaya Street

Tavonius Clinic

Dr E Tavonius had a large Clinic in Schoenwiese, presumably used as an out-patient clinic at least until he died in 1927. It was never the primary focus of his activity, which was in Muntau, Molotschna

He was the primary surgeon at the Muntau Hospital and was medical director of the Morija Deaconess Nursing School in Halbstadt

von Kampen, Julius

From Chortitza

Was in the Medical Corps in Moscow during World War I (probably the same person)

Studied at the University of Moscow, Faculty of Law

Practiced as a lawyer in Alexandrovsk

Warkentin, Johann

Owner of a public house (pub) in Alexandrovsk in the 1870s

Mennonite Business Philanthropy

Mennonite business leaders were active in supporting various Alexandrovsk institutions:

Alexandrovsk Women's Grammar School

Alexandrovsk Technical College

Alexandrovsk Commercial College (Koop Factory)

Alexandrovsk Mechanical College (Lepp & Wallmann Factory)

Society that assisted children's physical training

Helped build a local church

Helped build military hospitals

Helped war widows

They also gave to Mennonite institutions, although considering the income of some of the companies the contributions were very small

Lepp & Wallmann in 1910 contributed 464R to the Chortitza *Zentralschule* and 1,060R to the *Forstei*

Niebuhrs in 1914 contributed 372R to the Chortitza *Zentralschule* and 850R to the *Forstei*

The Niebuhr Clan System

The clan system was apparently an essential characteristic of the Mennonite business climate of Alexandrovsk. Through inter-clan marriages the financial relations between the various companies were regulated. This ensured reliable partners and avoided the outflow of capital from the enterprises. The Niebuhr family was central to this scheme, with Hermann having four daughters who were apparently willing to sell their souls to keep the money in the business. Maria married Andreas Wallmann, Justina married Johann J Lepp, Katharina married Abraham Abraham Koop and Sara married Johann Abraham Koop. Just to tie up the loose ends

Abraham Koop's daughter married Jakob Niebuhr.

Congress of Russian Manufacturers of Agricultural Machinery and Tools

Members were:

Lepp and Wallmann, Abraham Koop, Abraham Koop and Haelker

Abraham Koop was a council member

Johann Lepp was an adviser to the council chairman

Alexandrovsk Province (Uezd) Statistics

Milling (1912)

Entire Production in the province (15 mills) - 8,159,891R

Mennonite Enterprises - 7,362,391R (90%)

Machine Building (mainly agricultural equipment) (16 enterprises)

Entire Production in the province - 7,952,781R

Mennonite Enterprises - 2,749,781R (34%)

World War I, Russian Revolution, Civil War and Bolshevik Takeover

This is a discussion applicable to most of the businesses in Alexandrovsk, much of the information from JMS 2003, article by Natalia Venger

1910-1917 a series of laws were passed directed at German capital in Russia, to restrict foreign influence. All German speaking people were targeted, German settlers and Mennonites

"Liquidation Laws" were designed to liquidate German land holdings. Provision was made only for the price of the land, not for the value of the industry located on it, therefore industrial enterprises were threatened.

With onset of the war various firms demonstrated their patriotism:

In 1914 Lepp & Wallmann loaned farm machinery and tools for periods of up to three weeks, to families of men who had left for military duty

Koop supplied soldiers' families with monthly payment of grants

Niebuhr flour mills worked non-stop through the war, so as to fulfill the contract of 750,000 pounds of flour

On 19 August 1916 the Ministry of Trade and Industry announced a two-year moratorium on sales of land on which industrial establishments were located

Further investigation of Lepp & Wallmann was terminated because of Lepp's Dutch background and the fact that they were involved with military production.

After the moratorium was declared, orders for military supplies were sent to Lepp & Wallmann and others by the Alexandrovsk Military Committee

Lepp & Wallmann and the Koop companies amalgamated in November 1916 for strategic and economic purposes. The new company signed a number of agreements to produce projectiles of various kinds for the military

1916-1918 Koop produced goods totalling 1,467,979R, of which 90% was military.

Hildebrand and Priess, Koop and Helker were also involved in military production

During the war Lepp & Wallmann's yearly production reached a value of 1,557,530R, the

factories' capital doubled, to reach 2,400,000R (part of this was actually inflation)
During the war there was also shortage of raw materials and fuel.

April 1917, after abdication of the Czar, there was a "Temporary Government." Decrees established "Committees of Workers." These, together with the owners tried to manage the factories. After October 1917 the workers and trade unions were under Bolshevik control. The government allowed some of the former owners to play a part, since they actually needed their expertise.

A "Conciliation Commission" was established in Alexandrovsk, with representatives of the workers and owners, chairman was Johann Lepp. The committee tried to regulate problems such as wages and dismissals.

On 1 January 1918 the terms of the military contracts expired. Some of the earlier orders were never paid for, since the government had changed twice in the meantime

Survey by the Union of Plant-Holders of Ukraine showed losses incurred:

Lepp & Wallmann.....	1,008,925R
Koop.....	46,611R
Hildebrand and Priess.....	161,214R

During the German occupation April-November 1918, the enterprises were more active
February 1919 Koop and Hoelker was the first Mennonite enterprise to close

April and May 1919 all Mennonite enterprises were nationalized. Workers' committees allowed former owners to continue their work, and live in the factory apartments, but personal property was confiscated. In time the owners were completely discharged.

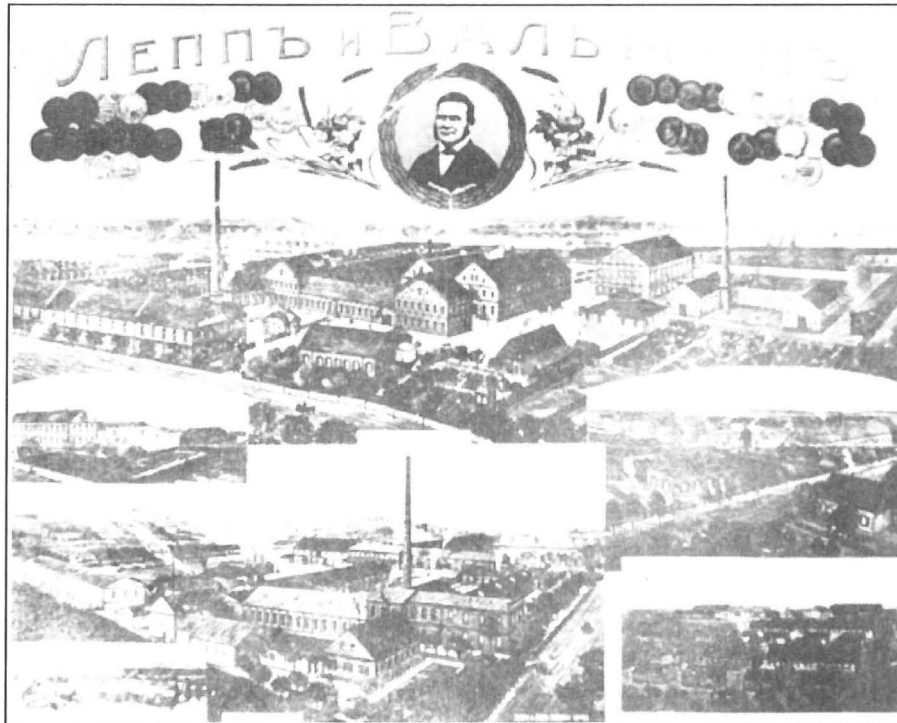
On 12 May 1919 worker Neufeld was appointed to manage the Lepp & Wallmann factories
August 1921 Lepp & Wallmann, A J Koop, Koop and Hoelker, Hildebrand and Priess and other factories obeyed the guidance of the Gubernian Committee of Steel Industries (Provincial Government Committee) Not known what these regulations were.

Most of the enterprises did not have competent management, and slowly stopped operating altogether. Alexandrovsk factories worked at partial capacity, with full production being restored by the mid 1920s

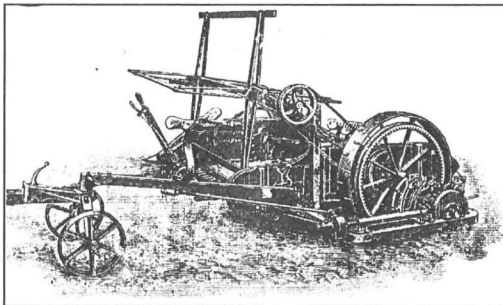
Three companies were amalgamated to form a large conglomerate Factory Kommunar. They were Lepp & Wallmann, K Hildebrand's Sons and Priess, A J Koop Agricultural Machines and Tools

This company, with chief engineer Peter Dyck, produced the first harvest combine designed in the Soviet Union in 1929. The engineers and the company received the Order of Lenin in 1931 for this achievement. In the "Stalin Purge" of 1937 the chief engineers involved were executed as "enemies of the people."

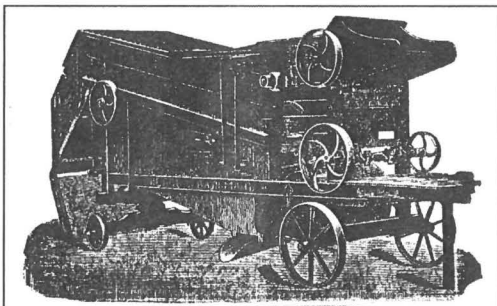
With the German invasion of Russia in 1941, much of the industry, including the factories in Zaporozhye was evacuated eastward, presumably behind the Ural Mountains. There were still many Mennonite employees, so they were also evacuated. Some did manage to escape, eventually getting to North and South America.



Lepp & Wallmann factories



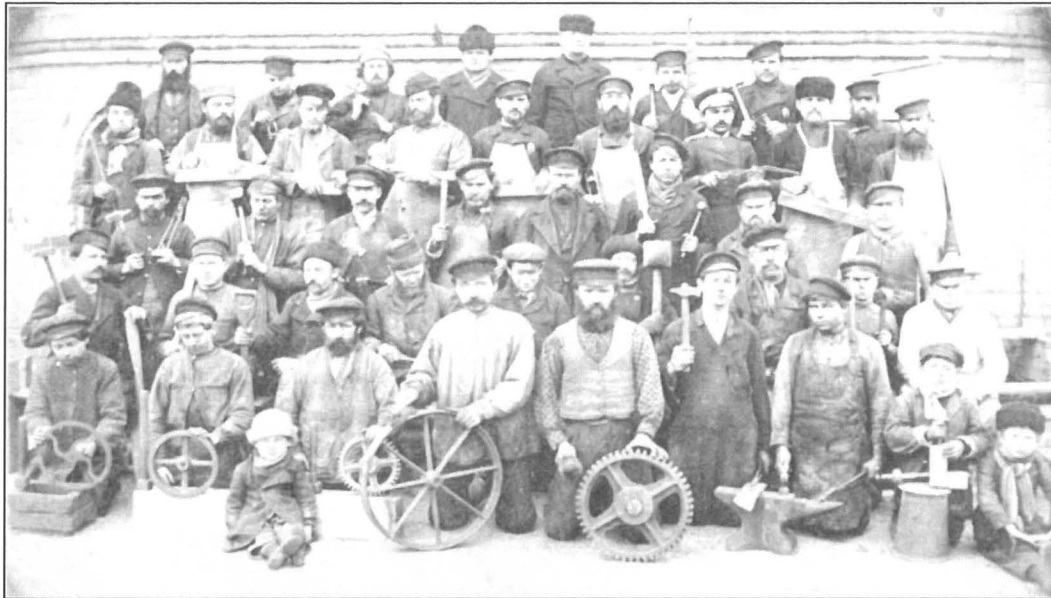
Lepp & Wallmann machinery in 1913



Lepp & Wallmann thresher 1913



Lepp & Wallmann pavilion at the South Russian Exposition in Ekaterinoslav in 1910



Early picture of Hildebrand factory employees. Top row 4th from left, son Jakob, then founder Kornelius Hildebrand



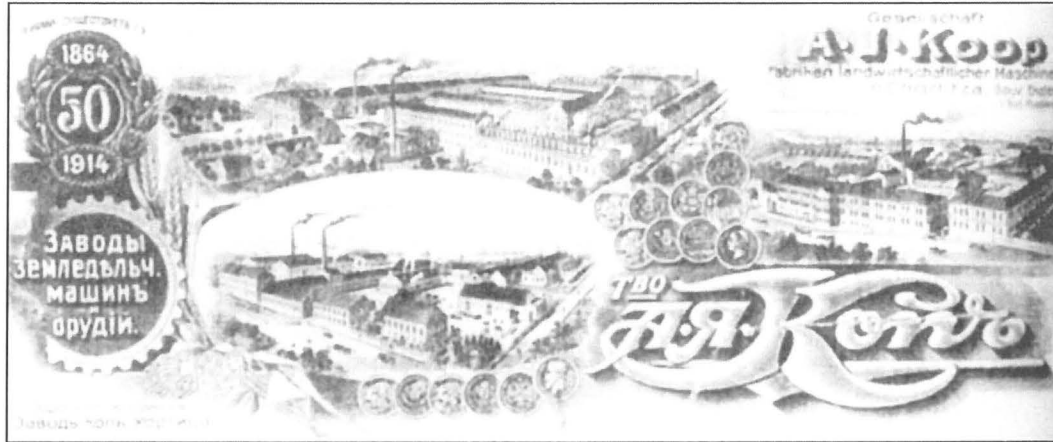
Hildebrand employees in 1908, front row second from left, founder Kornelius



Advertising in 1912



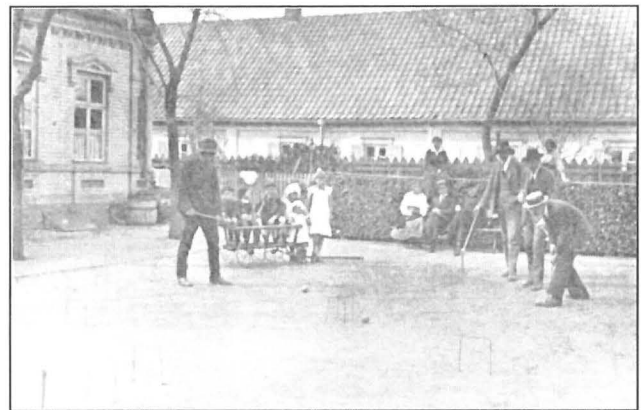
Hildebrand & Priess letterhead



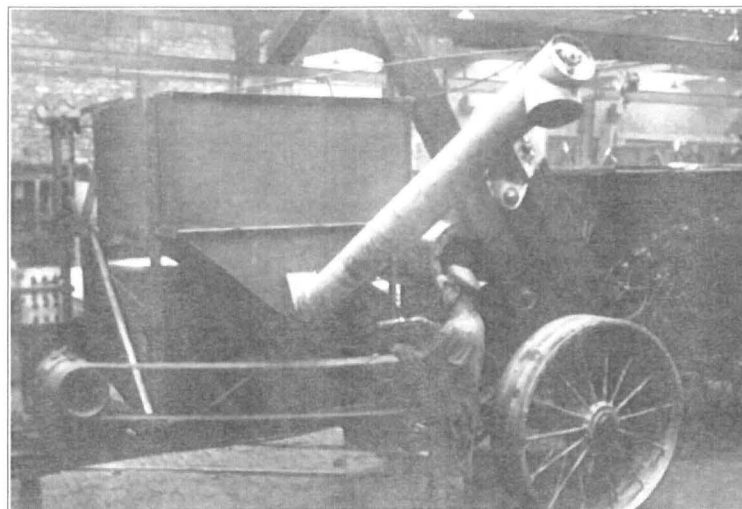
A J Koop company letterhead, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary, 1864-1914



Abraham Koop house on Datschnaya Street



Playing croquet on the yard of the Koop & Hoelker plant



First harvest combine built in the Soviet Union in 1929, by the Kommunar Factory (A Koop) in Zaporozhye



Niebuhr flour mill in Schoenwiese



H A Niebuhr and Co mill in Alexandrovsk



H A Niebuhr and Co steam mill in Schoenwiese, with residence of Hermann A Niebuhr on the right



Letterhead of the Janzen Brewery

Бук- und Schreibwarenhandlung
D. P. Isak, Schönwiese,
 bei Alexandrowst, Gouv. Zelatrinoslaw.

Neu! Dächels Bibelwerk Neu!
 in 7 Bänd. negekrzt statt Rbl. 19,65 nur Rbl. 21.—

— Praktische Bibelerkklärung —
 von P. Jabantz. Neues Testament in 2 Bd. Rbl. 9.— dasselbe
 auch in Einzelbe. breich. Rbl. — 65, geb. Rbl. 1,05.

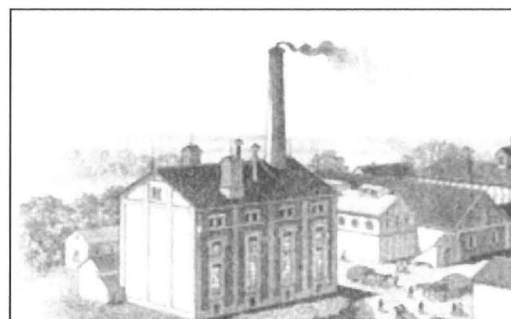
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 Deutsche und russische Bibeln, Testamente, Predigt, Andacht,
 Gesang- und Liederbücher, in einfachen und Prachtbänden,
 Schul-, Erbauungs- und Unterhaltungsbücher, russische und
 deutsche Klassiker, Bücher über Selbstheilerei, Wälsche, Kinder-
 leistung und weibliche Handarbeiten, Kränze zur grünen, silbernen
 und goldenen Hochzeit, Wandsprüche, Alben, Bilder, Bilderrahmen,
 Kontobücher und große Auswahl von Schreibwaren.

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Advertising in 1912



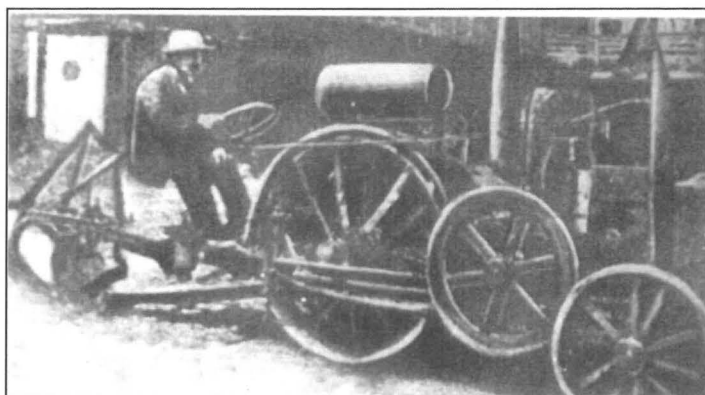
Janzen Brewery

Abraham Klassen
 Alexandrowst (Schönwiese) Zelat. Gouv.

Lager landwirtschaftlicher Maschinen und Geräte.

Rapthamotore „International“, Dampfdreschmaschinen „Höfer“,
 Selbstbinder, Selbstableger, Grassmaschinen, Pferderechen und
 Bindegarn „Mac-Gormil“, Rejerveteile „Mac-Gormil“ und
 „Milwaute“, Centrifugen „Adler“, „Perle“ und „Favorit“,
 Nähmaschinen „Dawis“, einfache und verjeufbare. Schmidts Wasch-
 und Buttermaschinen, Dezimalwagen, Triere, polierte Streich-
 bretter von Abraham Unger, u. s. w. Linoleum der Fabrik
 Alexander und Parson beliebige Muster stets auf Lager.

Advertising in 1914



First tractor built in Zaporozhye, Kichkas Works in 1924



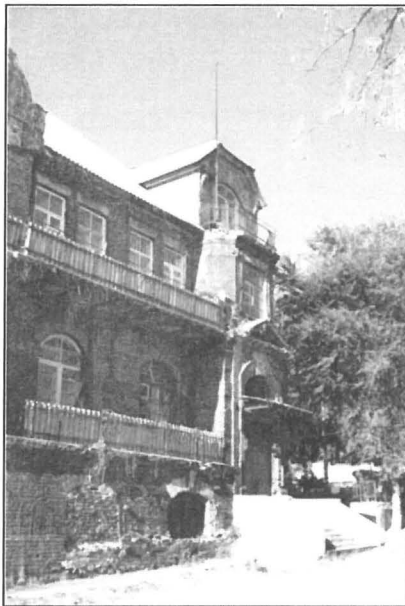
Workers at the Factory Kommunar



Technical designers and technologists for Factory Kommunar in 1936. Front row l to r: Olga Martens, Anna Pries, Caea Klassen, Emma Weissnar, back row l to r: Kaethe Koop, Helene Wiebe

Reminders of the past

Pictures from 2004



Wallmann House, Zaporozhye



Wallmann House, Zaporozhye



Metal steps in the former Chortitza
Maedchenschule, made by Lepp &
Wallmann



Urology Hospital, Zaporozhye, former Lepp
& Wallmann Hospital for their employees



Operating Room window in the previous Lepp &
Wallmann Hospital, now Urology Hospital for the
whole city of Zaporozhye

The Lepp & Wallmann company took care of its employees, even building a hospital for their care. A Mennonite Heritage Tour visited the hospital in 2004, and after some persuasion, medical personnel was allowed into the building. As usual, they were taken to the director's office to hear a speech, but were not permitted to actually see anything.

ALEXANDROVSK INSTITUTIONS WHERE MENNONITES PARTICIPATED

Second Guild Merchant's Certificates

In 1870 a considerable number of Mennonites purchased certificates, granting them the right to own large stores and industrial establishments. At this time none of the businesses were large

Alexandrovsk City Council (Gorodskaja Duma)

Gerhard Krahn (1885-1889) - a businessman and very busy, often missed meetings, and even was reprimanded for this

Abraham Dyck (1907-1912) - a businessman and very busy, often missed meetings, and even was reprimanded for this

In 1912 Johann Lepp, Abraham J Koop, Jakob Niebuhr, Peter Priess and Gerhard Janzen were elected to multi-year terms. Generally well thought of; tended to be pro-active in city projects, especially if the projects would benefit the business climate

- building the new railway from Saratov to Alexandrovsk
- widening the Alexandrovsk harbour
- building city grain storehouses

One year Andreas Wallmann and Jakob Niebuhr were awarded the title of "Hereditary Honourable Citizen" because of their public activity

In 1917 Peter P Priess and Abraham A Koop were elected, but their activities were halted by the Russian Revolution

Alexandrovsk Regional Assembly

Johann J Fast was a member of the Regional Assembly of Alexandrovsk (Uyesdnaya Uprava)

TYPHUS

An acute contagious disease caused by a louse-borne bacteria, *Rickettsia prowazekii*

The organism is transmitted by the human body louse. Feeding on a human being who carries the bacillus, the *Rickettsia* grows in the gut of the louse, then is excreted in the faeces. The disease is then transmitted to another human who scratches the very itchy louse bite, and rubs the faeces into the wound. The incubation period for onset of symptoms in the infected person is one to two weeks.

Symptoms set in quickly. They include severe headache, sustained high fever, cough, rash, severe muscle pain, chills, falling blood pressure, stupor, sensitivity to light, and delirium

Endemic typhus is most common during war and in periods of privation, such as occurred during the Russian Civil War. It is caused by *Rickettsia typhi*, which is transmitted by the fleas that infest rats.

Both kinds of typhus are prevalent under conditions of over crowding, with lack of proper facilities, such as occur in prisons, concentration camps, or crowded ships. Mortality rate is from 10% to 60%

Modern treatment with intravenous fluids, oxygen and antibiotics greatly improves the prognosis. In the time period we are studying, none of these treatments were available - antibiotics had not yet been invented!

A number of people from the Chortitza Colony area that we have studied died of typhus, most during the Russian Civil War. This is not surprising, since the region was overrun by various armies or robber gangs at least 23 times!

Jakob Kornelius Hildebrand (age 44) - died in Schoenwiese 21 September 1899

Kornelius Jakob Hildebrand (age 87) - died in Chortitza 2 January 1920

Jakob Abraham Koop (age 58) - died in Chortitza 2 February 1920

Katharina Jakob Koop (age 58) (wife of Jakob) - died in Chortitza 15 October 1919

David Abraham Koop (age 48) - died in Chortitza 20 January 1920

Heinrich Abraham Koop (age 82) - died in Chortitza 1 January 1920

Maria Priess (age 44) - died in Schoenwiese 5 February 1920

Gerhard Priess (age 54) - died in Schoenwiese 6 February 1920

Kornelius Huebert (age 28) - died in Zaporozhye 2 April 1922

Julius von Kampen (age 36) died in Schoenwiese 24 January 1920

Aganetha Janzen (age 29) died in Schoenwiese 5 February 1920

Jakob Janzen (age 3) died in Schoenwiese 15 May 1930

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Chapter II

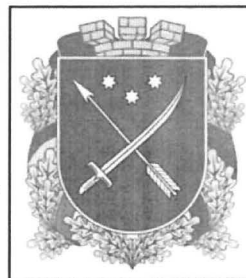
EKATERINOSLAV DNEPROPETROVSK DNIPROPETROVSKE

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HISTORY OF EKATERINOSLAV/DNEPROPETROVSK

Ekaterinoslav (also written Yekaterinoslav) was founded in 1776 by Prince Grigori Potemkin at the site of a village called Polotsia, originally built by the Cossack Hloba. The initial location was considered unsuitable due to flooding, so it was moved to higher ground. It was named in honor of Russian Czarina Catherine the Great. Located in the northern part of the steppe, it was on the somewhat elevated right bank at a bend of the Dniepr River. Plan of development was outlined by the chief national architect Ivan Starov in 1790, and also by Vassily Geste in 1817. Ekaterinoslav first flourished as the administrative centre of New Russia, the land which had recently been taken over from the Ottoman Empire. In the overall scheme it was to be the third capital of Russia.



Coat of Arms

After the death of Potemkin in 1791 the town declined, and by Czar Paul I's decree was renamed Novorosiysk in 1797. Paul obviously did not wish to honour his recently deceased mother.

The town reverted back to its original name in 1802, the year after Paul I was assassinated. Also in 1802 Ekaterinoslav became a gubernial centre, in 1804 the very influential Poltava Seminary was moved to the town, and a year later the first *Gymnasium* was opened. Early in the 1800s the Board of Guardians, responsible for the supervision of foreign colonists (including the Mennonites) was located in Ekaterinoslav. In 1847 a new theatre was built.



Potemkin's Palace in Ekaterinoslav

By 1861 the population of Ekaterinoslav was 19,000. It had developed around a central street, the Catherine Prospect, which ran roughly parallel to the Dniepr River. One and two story buildings had been erected along the prospect, but in a rather chaotic fashion. The most prominent building on the street was the palace of Prince Potemkin. The economic importance of the city depended to a considerable degree on the Dniepr River. Because of rapids in that stretch of the river the town served as a reloading post for shipments of wood, lumber and grain. More intensive development of Ekaterinoslav began in the 1870s, when a railway linking Kharkov to Sevastopol ran through the city. The Catherine Railway Line (later called the Dniepr Line) was completed in 1883, connecting the new industry of the



Street in early Ekaterinoslav



Administrative building

Donets Basin to Krivoy Rog. The city was therefore at a crossroad, grain and lumber travelling the river route, coal and iron by rail. Ekaterinoslav became the main centre of the metallurgical industry of Ukraine. In 1887, for example, the Alexander Metallurgical Plant was opened, and in 1889 a large pipe making factory was built. Reflecting the agricultural surroundings, towards the end of the century a considerable grain milling industry also developed, by 1897 there were 21 mills. Despite this, in 1913 about two-thirds of the 358

enterprises in Ekaterinoslav still were in the metallurgical or metal working sector.

Population in the meantime had risen considerably, being 47,000 in 1887, then 121,000 in 1897 and 218,500 in 1912. Much of the industrial labour force was brought in from Russia.

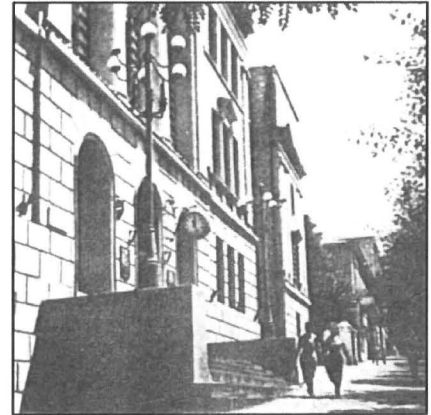
Ekaterinoslav also developed various aspects of cultural life. There were theatres and various educational institutions; students from the region came in to study at the well recognized *Gymnasia*. Ukrainian nationalism developed slowly, hindered by the large percentage of Russians in the city. With the outbreak of the Revolution of 1917 the Ukrainian community became more active and actually established a Ukrainian *Gymnasium*. A university was established in Ekaterinoslav in 1919, during the time Johann Esau was the mayor.

The Russian Civil War disturbed much of the of the city, Ekaterinoslav changing hands many times (by some tabulations 20 times). Nestor Makhno's headquarters at Gulyaipole were nearby, so he

paid particular attention to the city. He occupied Ekaterinoslav in 1919, using the Astoria Hotel as his headquarters, and plundered the city several times. With the destruction of commercial firms, banishment or murder of many prominent citizens, Bolshevik requisitioning and the famine of 1921-22, the city declined, by 1923 having only 123,000 inhabitants.

When relative stability was established with the Communists taking control, some of the industry returned or was rebuilt. In 1926

Ekaterinoslav amalgamated with the town located on the left bank of the Dniepr River, Amur-Nyzhniedniproviski. It was then named Dnepropetrovsk, for the Dniepr River and Grigori I



University of Dnepropetrovsk, established while Johann Esau was mayor



Astoria Hotel, headquarters of Makhno in 1919

Petrovsk, an early Soviet Ukrainian leader. Of the 232,900 inhabitants in 1926, 35.9% were Ukrainians, 31.5% Russians, and 26.7% Jews. Industrial development continued in the 1930s.

After the German invasion of Russia during World War II, Dnepropetrovsk was occupied on 12 October 1941. The city was one of six *General Bezirke* in the organization of the region. Prior to the war the city was an important centre of Jewish life with at least 80,000 Jews. Soon after the Germans conquered the city 11,000 Jews were shot, with apparently only 15 Jews of Dnepropetrovsk surviving until the end of the war.

After the German retreat of 1943 reconstruction of the city's economy began. An automobile industry was established in the 1950s, as well as factories producing communications and mining machinery. Nuclear, arms and space industries were also centred in Dnepropetrovsk. It was the home of Yuzhmash, a major space and ballistic missile designer and manufacturer. Because of its strategic military and manufacturing sectors, it was a closed city until the 1990s. By 1959 the population reached 690,000, of which 59% were Ukrainian, 29% Russian and only 8% Jews. Obviously some Jews had returned or moved in from other parts of the country after World War II.

Dnepropetrovsk has a university and teaching institutions of mining, agriculture, chemical technology, metallurgy, medicine, and railway and structural engineering. There are several theatres, both Ukrainian and Russian, and a concert hall. The city boasts an orchestra, and a Ukrainian Premier League football (soccer) club. It is the capital of the Dnepropetrovsk Oblast, which has a population of 3,476,200 and an area of 31,901 sq. km. Besides industry, the region has considerable agricultural production, the major crops being winter wheat and maize. In 1991 the population of the city was estimated at 1,189,300. Because of the considerable military presence the city was closed to tourists until 1991.

Also in 1991 the city abandoned its Russian name for the Ukrainian version, Dnipropetrovsk or Dnipropetrovske. With the break-up of the Soviet Union many of the inefficient industrial complexes no longer function, so a considerable number of factories in the city and along the Dniepr stand empty. The Astoria Hotel, originally built 1912-1913, despite its history of Makhno's occupancy, still beckons tourists with its 3-star rating.

Currently the third largest city in Ukraine, Dnipropetrovske has had adequate political representation. Leonid Kuchma was Prime Minister of Ukraine from 1994 to 2005, with Yulia Tymoshenko, also from the city, replacing him in 2005.

Dnipropetrovske has a mixture of temperate and continental climates, summer temperatures going up to 30°, while winter can cool down to -15°. Most of the year is fairly dry, but there can be long periods of rain in the autumn.

Throughout most of its history there has been a considerable Mennonite presence in Ekaterinoslav. The Chortitza Colony was founded just south of the city in 1789, so it is not surprising that Ekaterinoslav became the business centre for Mennonites living in the area. Likely the first Mennonites to live in Ekaterinoslav were the Heinrich Thiessen family from Prussia, who were operating a vinegar distillery and a treadmill by 1805, then later a steam-powered mill. A number of other Mennonites followed, among them Heinrich Cornies, David Schroeder, Jakob Epp and Heinrich Toews. Heinrich Heese II and Abram Hamm came in 1820, because they wanted better educational opportunities. Mennonites continued to use Ekaterinoslav as a centre for additional education. Jakob and Johann Esau, on the basis of the "Alexander Stipend" studied at a *Gymnasium*, Jakob eventually becoming an ophthalmologist, and setting up a hospital in

Ekaterinoslav, Johann becoming an engineer, and in time mayor of Ekaterinoslav.

By 1851 there were enough Mennonites in Ekaterinoslav to require the founding of an elementary school. Heinrich David Epp taught in the school for a number of years, likely in the mid 1850s. In time it developed into a larger school with three teachers. In 1910 a new school was built, which also functioned as church.

The first church services were held in private homes on alternate Sundays. For official functions the elder from Krons Garten was called; the congregation was an affiliate of the Chortitza Mennonite Church. Once a school building was constructed the church met in that facility. David Heinrich Epp of Rosenthal was the first minister, also functioning as teacher in the school until he moved to Berdyansk in 1912. A new school/church building was planned, but the outbreak of World War I in 1914 prevented these plans from being carried out.

During World War I the southern branch of the *Forsteidienst* was based in Ekaterinoslav, with Johann Esau in charge of supplies for at least 2,000 of the *Sanitaeter*.

Ekaterinoslav was the judicial centre for the region. When the early Mennonite Brethren were sent to jail in the 1860s, they were incarcerated in the Ekaterinoslav jail. The brutal

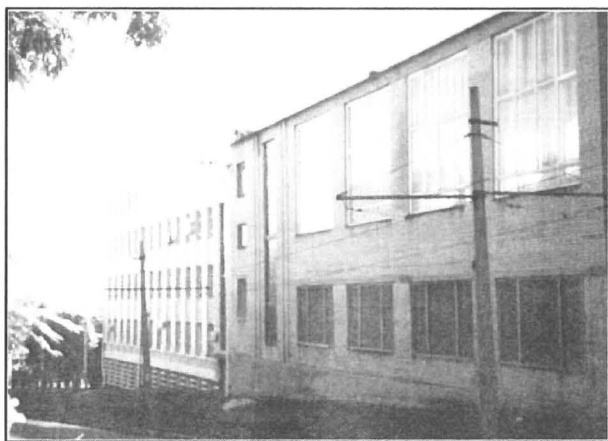


City Council room, where mayor Johann Esau would have worked

Communist regime continued the trend, the secret police occupying a large building, where many Mennonites were certainly imprisoned and tortured. Engineers Peter Dyck and Gerhard Hamm were imprisoned in Zaporozhye, but then sentenced 16 September, and executed 17 September 1937 in Dnepropetrovsk.

In the meantime there was considerable Mennonite activity in the business world, particularly in the grain milling field. In 1900 there were 17 mills operating in Ekaterinoslav, with 80-90% of the milling capacity in Mennonite hands. Heinrich Thiessen had started small in 1805, but in 1851 built a large steam-powered mill, with steam and milling equipment from England, and millstones from France.

Johann Fast started with a treadmill in 1844, then constructed a steam-powered mill in 1866. It burned down in 1890, but was rebuilt, and back in operation by 1895. Johann Heinrich Toews and his brother Jakob constructed a steam-powered mill in 1868. By 1890 Johann became the sole owner, and his brother Jakob constructed another mill. Heinrich Heese and his brother Peter built a huge mill in 1879, using equipment ordered from Germany. But Mennonites were also involved in other business. Johann Johann Toews, son of Johann Heinrich Toews, owned a soap factory.



Former KGB and currently police headquarters
Photographing the building is still discouraged

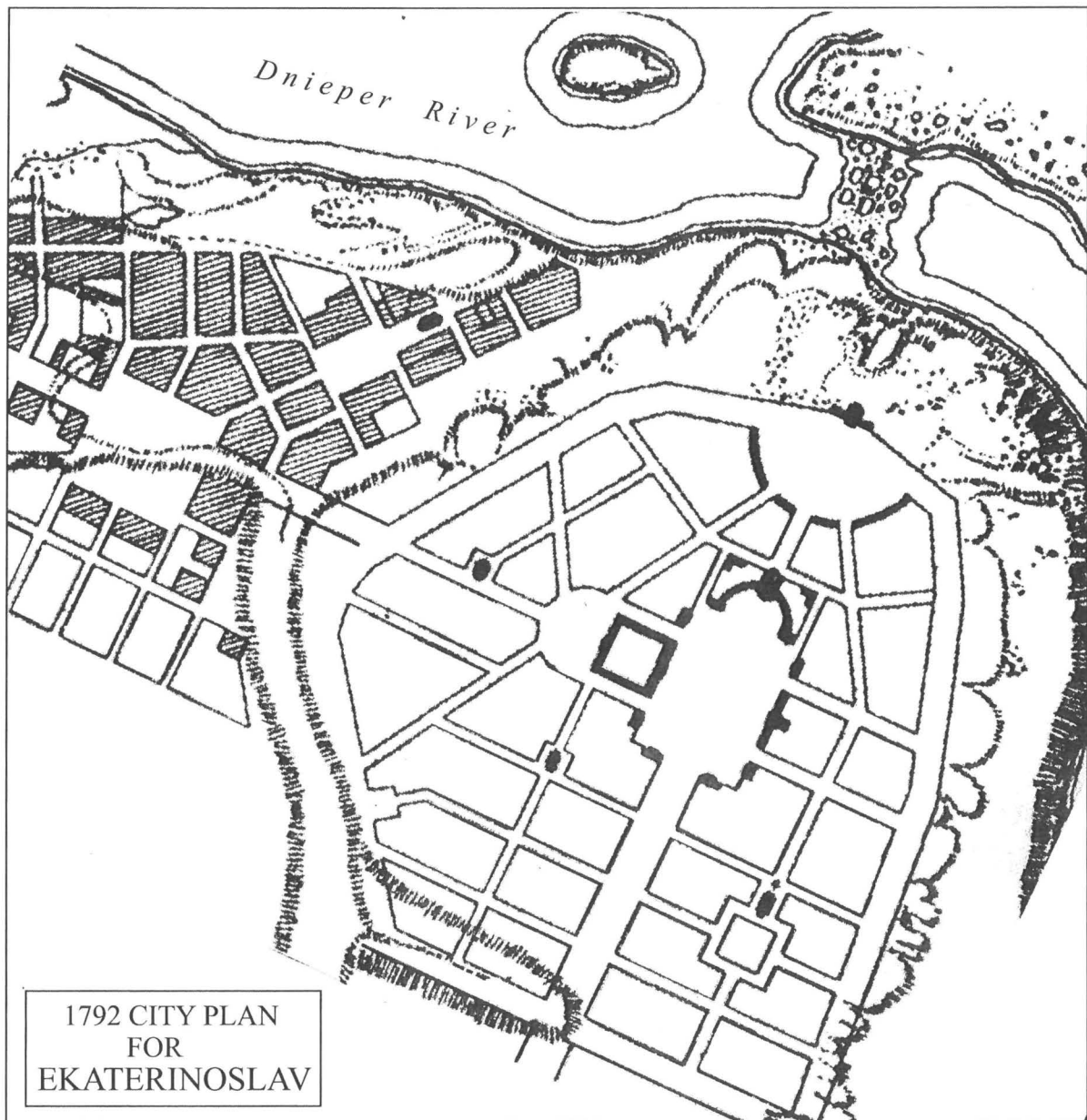
Johann Esau was established a small steel works factory.

Mennonites were involved in local politics. Johann Esau was administrator of maintenance and operations for the city, then 1905-1909, as well as 1917-1919 was the mayor. Johann J Thiessen, Johann J Fast, Johann Heinrich Toews and a Reimer were members of city council, and Peter H Funk served as judge.

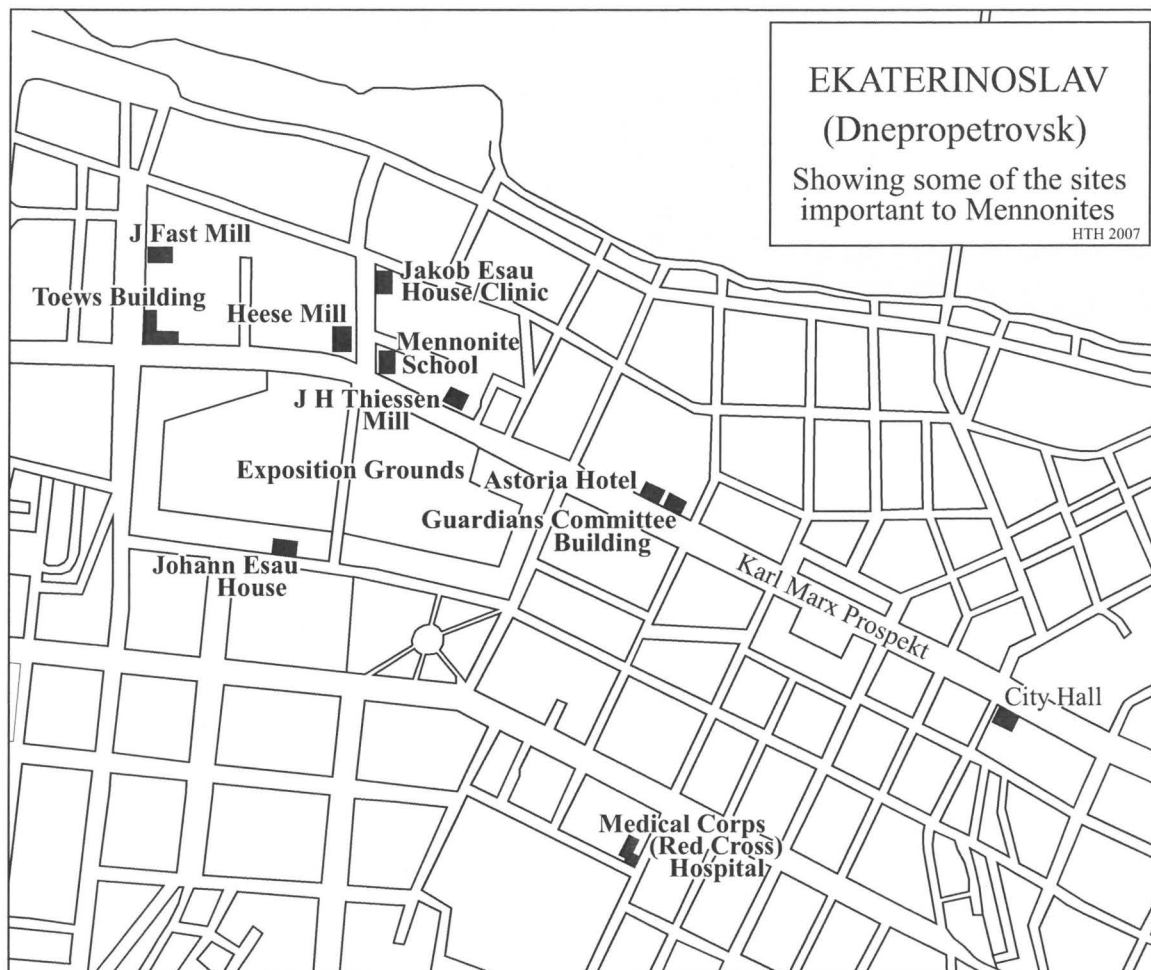
Der Botschafter, a Mennonite periodical begun in 1905 in Ekaterinoslav, was published twice a week. David H Epp, also a minister and teacher, was the editor. Frequent strikes as well as other difficulties, made it necessary to transfer printing of the paper to Berdyansk in 1907. Epp eventually followed in 1912.

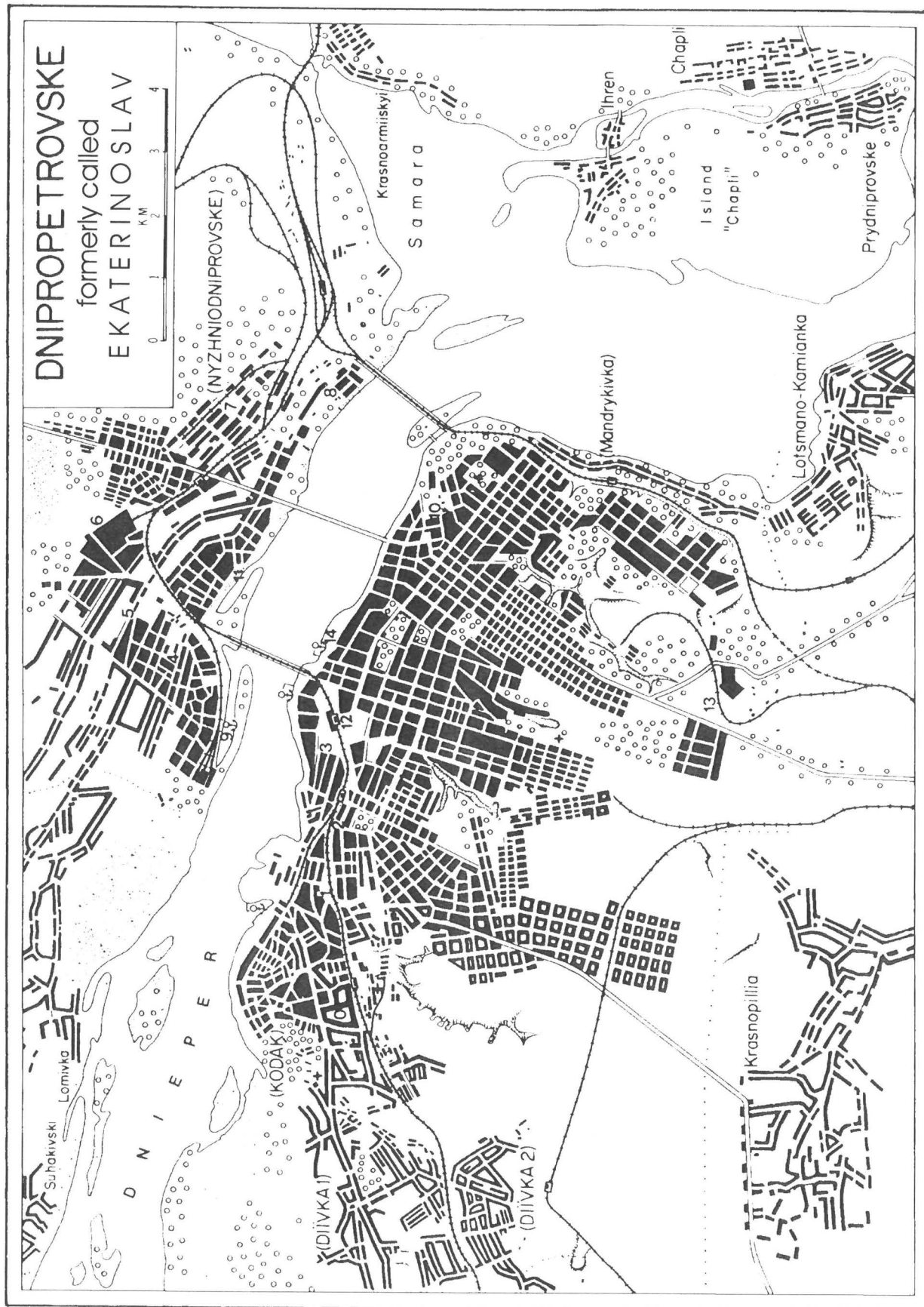
There were said to be only 9 Mennonite families in Ekaterinoslav in 1889, with 50 individuals. Judging from the amount of activity, in education, church and business, this would seem to too conservative an estimate. By 1889 it was tabulated that there were 31 families, with 158 individuals. With the onset of the Revolution and the subsequent Civil War a number of Mennonites fled from surrounding estates into the city, swelling the ranks. With the brutality of war, with the difficulties of government confiscation of business, and simple things such as the famine, the Mennonite population again dwindled. In the early 1920s at least 34 family units, 146 individuals, migrated to Canada.

Now there is no Mennonite presence in Dnepropetrovsk, but many of the old buildings are still there. The Toews and Esau homes remain as reminders of the grand past. The Thiessen and Fast mills still stand; the Thiessen buildings are a school, but the Fast's built well, the mill is still functioning as a mill.



1792 CITY PLAN
FOR
EKATERINOSLAV





LIST OF PEOPLE

(People who at one time lived or died in Ekaterinoslav/Dnepropetrovsk)

(Each name will appear in **bold** print only once)

We have been able to identify at least 410 Mennonites who spent some time of their lives in Ekaterinoslav/Dnepropetrovsk. Some seem to have lived their whole life span in the city, others were there briefly, perhaps only the time required for them to be executed! A number of clans had such intricate relationships that attempts were made to clarify the situation by mapping out family trees.

Andres, Heinrich

Chairman of a meeting held by the Mennonites of Ekaterinoslav in 1917

It was held in an empty warehouse on the yard of Johann Thiessen

Questions were discussed relating to the problems of the church and Mennonites in general

Berg, Peter

One of the four Chortitza Mennonite Brethren leaders who were arrested 12 July 1862 and jailed for 2 weeks in Ekaterinoslav

Born about 1832, lived with family in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony

Baptized and joined the MB Church in 1862

Moved to the Kuban Colony in 1863

Bergmann, Helena Jakob

(age 51)

Children: **Hermann Julius** (22), **Jakob** (21), **Helena** (18), **Heinrich** (17), **Rudolf** (13), **Maria** (11)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* 13 December 1922

Bergmann, Hermann Abram

Born 12 June 1850 in Dirschau region of West Prussia

Parents Abram Bergmann and Susanna Friesen

Came to Russia with family in 1862

His father bought a large estate near Solenoye in the province of Ekaterinoslav

Married **Helena Julius Heinrichs** on 17 August 1872; she was born 12 May 1853

The couple had 11 children, of whom 6 lived to adulthood:

Hermann - born 1874 in Bergmannsthal, *Gymnasium* in Kharkov, in 1919 escaped to the Crimea, but was captured in Feodosiya. Executed some time after October, 1919.

Julius - born 1875 in Bergmannsthal, *Gymnasium* in Kharkov, several days after the departure of father Hermann (likely about 28 January 1919) Julius and brother Abram also fled, to Chortitza, then to Nikolaipol, then south. They and their companions were captured and incarcerated in a Russian village called Balki. They were beaten, left in the cold cell with only underwear on, then taken out and shot, their bodies thrown down a well.

Helena - born 1877 in Bergmannsthal, died 1878

Abram - born 1879 in Bergmannsthal, *Gymnasium* in Kharkov, several days after the departure of father Hermann (likely about 28 January 1919) Abram and brother Julius also fled, to Chortitza, then to Nikolaipol, then south. They and their companions were captured and incarcerated in a Russian village called Balki. They were beaten, left in the cold cell with only underwear on, then taken out and shot, their bodies thrown down a well.

Helena - born 1881 in Bergmannsthal, *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav about 1894, died 1903, likely in Bergmannsthal

Kornelius - born 1883 in Bergmannsthal, died 1883

Aganetha - born 1884 in Bergmannsthal, *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav about 1897, married a Martens, had some children, her husband was murdered, after which she migrated to Canada in 1923, settling in Fiske, Saskatchewan, mother came to live with her in 1926, but died 1927, Aganetha died 1962

Susanna - born 1886 in Bergmannsthal, died 1887

Katharina - born 1888 in Bergmansthal, died in 1889

Heinrich - born 1890 in Bergmannsthal, *Gymnasium* in Kharkov, eventually banned to the far north, to the White Sea area. Not sure when he died

Susanna - born 1892 in Bergmannsthal, died 1894

Hermann and his brother Abram inherited their father's estate of 4,436 dess called Bergmannsthal

Hermann enlarged his holdings, so by 1898 he had 4,090.5 dess, and by 1908 this was enlarged to 9,712 dess

Initial wealth was based on sheep, but Hermann also had a brick factory, a windmill and a steam mill on the estate

Said to be a model farmer, influential and politically active. Helped peasants purchase land

Entered politics in 1890, elected to the Ekaterinoslav *zemstvo* (county governing council)

There was some unrest among the peasants in the uprising of 1904-1905, with a confrontation in the neighbouring village of Solenoye

For reasons of safety the Bergmanns moved to the city of Ekaterinoslav in 1906

Still maintained ties to the Mennonite community: on board of Nikolaipol *Zentralschule*, contributed to Mennonite causes such as Bethania

Elected to Ekaterinoslav *zemstvo* (city council) in 1906, remaining until 1917

Elected to the Third Russian Duma in 1907 as an Octobrist, and re-elected in 1912. Not known for saying much at the assembly, but active in committee work and representing Mennonite causes

January 1919 Bolshevik forces were approaching Ekaterinoslav. Hermann feared, because he was a well known person and was wealthy, that he would be captured. He and several others fled the city (possibly January 25), headed to Chortitza, Nikolaipol and then south. They were captured and imprisoned in a Russian village. They were shot and their bodies thrown down a well

It was said that when the White Army occupied the area, the bodies were taken out of the well and given a proper burial

Wife Helena migrated to Canada in 1926, where she died in 1927 at her daughter Aganetha's home in Fiske, Saskatchewan

Braun, Jakob

Born about 1897

Parents **Jacob Braun** and **Justina Rempel**, of Ekaterinoslav

Son Jacob was a refugee in Constantinople 21 February 1921

Boese, Heinrich Heinrich

(age 46)

Wife **Anna Ida** (43)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Cornies, Heinrich

Came to Ekaterinoslav 1805 or a little later

Dueck, Heinrich Heinrich

(age 39)

Wife **Maria Heinrich** (30)

Children: **Helena** (10), **Lydia** (8)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Dyck, Daniel Johann

Address: Poltavskaya 15, Ekaterinoslav

Asked for food drafts through pages of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* 17 May 1922 p 6

Looking for Jakob Johann Dyck, Herbert, Saskatchewan or Winkler, Manitoba

Daniel Johann Dueck (51), wife **Elisabeth Jakob** (46), children: **Daniel Daniel** (21),
Jakob (18), **Elisabeth** (15)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Dyck, Peter Johann

(see biography in Alexandrovsk p 51)

Born 3 June 1889 in Osterwick, Chortitza Colony

Studied as a mechanical engineer in Germany

Married Elisabeth Wilhelm in Germany in 1912

Children: Herbert (1913), Margaretha (1915), Peter, Walter (1924), Hildegard (1926)

Was sent to Germany in 1925 to assess some of the American agricultural machines

Was the chief engineer for the Factory Kommunar, former Koop Factory, in Schoenwiese

Together with his friend Gerhard Hamm, Kornelius Pauls and others, worked on the first
combine produced in the Soviet Union

For this they and the factory, after examination by Kalinin himself, received the
Order of Lenin 3 September 1931

In his position Peter was allowed to build a fine house in Einlage as well as have a few
holidays in southern resorts

On 8 April 1937, 11 of the leading people from the factory were accused of being enemies of
the people, were arrested and jailed in Zaporozhye

They were sentenced on 16 September, and executed 17 September in Dnepropetrovsk
As of 6 March 1958 Peter was officially “rehabilitated.”

Epp, David Heinrich

(see biography David Heinrich Epp p 160)

Born 30 May 1861 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony

Father Heinrich David Epp

Educated in the local *Dorfschule* and then the Chortitza *Zentralschule*

Taught at Osterwick and Rosental 1878-1899

In 1883 he married **Anna Hamm**, she was born in 1864

Children:

1. **Heinrich** - born 1884

2. **David** - born 1886

3. **Gerhard** - born 1890, died 1890

1886 minister of the Chortitza Mennonite congregation

1899 pastor of the Ekaterinoslav congregation

Teacher in the elementary school and gave religious instruction at the local business college

1905 began publication of *Der Botschafter* in Ekaterinoslav

Through his work as minister in Ekaterinoslav he became aware of the needs of those with mental illness, and campaigned vigourously for the establishment of a mental institution

1912 moved to Berdyansk, where he continued as editor of *Der Botschafter* and did church work. In the publication he was helped and supported by H A Ediger

For many years chairman of the *Kommission fuer Kirchliche Angelegenheiten (KfK)* which was organized in 1910

1913-1914 was editor of the *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch*

1914 *Der Botschafter* was closed down by the government, likely in October

1922 appointed as a member of the committee to distribute food packages to the Mennonites in Berdyansk, also requested food draft for himself

1923 the Lichtenau congregation asked him to minister to their disorganized congregation

1927 called to be elder of his home Chortitza Mennonite congregation. This he did despite increasing difficulty. Resigned in 1931, but continued to work privately.

David H Epp was best known for his writings, and his compassionate church work

Some of the books were:

Die Chortitzer Mennoniten (1889)

Kurze Erklærung und Erlæuterungen zum Katechismus (1896)

J Cornies, Zuege aus seinem Leben und Wirken (1909)

Die Memriker Ansiedlung (1910)

He also wrote articles for many periodicals: *Mennonitische Blaetter*, *Odessaer Zeitung*, *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch*, *Unser Blatt*, *Der Bote*, and of course his own publication *Der Botschafter*

David suffered a number of strokes, and died 30 May 1934

Anna, who had also been ill, died shortly after David, also in 1934

Epp, Jakob

Came to Ekaterinoslav 1805 or a little later

Epp, Johann (Hans)

Born 1884 in Chortitza and grew up there

Married Anna Heinrichs (1890-1977) in 1912

Was a teacher, then functioned as a bookkeeper at a number of places

Arrested in 1934, he was jailed in Dnepropetrovsk; shortly after his sentencing on 29 May 1935 in Dnepropetrovsk he wrote a poem "*Mein Gerichtstag*" (My Day of Judgement)

The last 2 lines are:

*"Nimm mich und all' die Lieben mein
in Deine Obhut, Leitung, Schirm and Schutz allein."*

"Take me and all my loved ones
under your care, leading, and protection."

He was sentenced to 4 years' hard labour in the Siberian concentration camp Perekovka

1938 again before the court; this time he was released, but was declared a non-person

Hardly recognizable, he arrived home in Nikolaipol on 3 February 1939

In August 1941 he was employed as a teacher in Blumengart, at the same time functioning as minister and choir director in the local Mennonite Church

After the end of World War II the family was in Leipzig, and in 1947 migrated to Paraguay, settling in the Volendam Colony

By 1954 the whole family had migrated to Canada, where the parents first lived in Steinbach, then with daughter Elvira in Crystal City, where Johann died in 1974, Anna in 1977

Epp, Johann Jakob

(age 41)

Wife **Anna Heinrich** (29)

Children: **Paul** (3), **Peter** (1)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* 13 December 1922

Esau, Jakob Jakob

Born 19 December 1856 in Halbstadt, Molotschna

Parents Jakob Esau and Katharina Neufeld, Jakob was the *Oberschulze* of the Molotschna

To *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav as part of his education, having won a special "Alexander Stipend"

Jakob then studied medicine in Kiev

Practiced as physician in the Chortitza villages

By 1894 he had established a private eye clinic and a small hospital in Ekaterinoslav

Married widow **Susanna Toews (nee Heese)** 12 July 1886

She had 2 children from her previous marriage:

1. Johann - born 1882
2. Peter - born 27 June 1883, died 4 August 1883

Children of the Esaus:

1. **Louise** - born 6 April 1887, died 25 January 1890
2. **Alexander** - born 31 August 1888 in Rosenthal, Chortitza Colony, married **Helena Klassen** 12 July 1915, she was born 14 September 1893, they had **3 children**
Alexander studied in the Institute of Mining in Ekaterinoslav, worked as an

engineer in Ekaterinoslav

He died in 1944

3. **Peter** - born 30 March 1891, apparently became an MD, married a Russian MD named Anna

4. **Maria** - born 5 December 1892, married Dr Peter Peters June 1916, 2 daughters, husband exiled and likely died 1938, to Canada after WW II, died 23 May 1974

5. **Nicolai** - born 11 June 1894, married Nadine Hilz, 2 children, died 3 November 1973 in the USA

6. **Michael** - born 30 January 1896, married Kseniya Samashnaya, 2 children

Jakob Esau died 2 November 1927 in Ekaterinoslav

Wife Susanna died 18 October 1950 in Canada

Esau, Johann Jakob

(see biography Johann Jakob Esau p 163)

Born 25 July 1859 in Halbstadt, Molotschna

Parents Jakob Esau and Katharina Neufeld; Jakob was the *Oberschulze* of the Molotschna

To Gymnasium in Ekaterinoslav as a part of his education, having won a special "Alexander Stipend"

The went to the Polytechnical Institute in Riga, where he graduated as a mechanical engineer in 1884

Worked on a ship-building yard in Sevastopol, then on the oil fields in Baku

1889 hired on as engineer for "Lepp and Wallmann" in Schoenwiese

Also 1889 married **Margarethe Toews** of Ekaterinoslav. Their 4 children were all born there:

1. **Nicolai** - born 7 August 1890, died at about 1 year of age

2. **Marie** - born 17 September 1892, also died at about 1 year of age

3. **Paul** - went to Polytechnical Institute in Riga, achieved a degree in chemistry, graduating in 1916. Joined the *Sanitaetsdienst*, then pursued his education and profession in the United States. Married Esther Siemens 25 June 1929, but had no children

4. **Katherine** - born 3 April 1898, studied agriculture, first in Russia, then Germany, then in the United States. Taught botany at the University of California. Authored 6 books and many scientific articles. Elected to the National Academy of Sciences in the United States, and in 1989 received the National Medal of Science, the highest honor accorded scientists and engineers in the United States. She died in 1997 in Santa Barbara

Esau moved to Ekaterinoslav to start his own business. Built a metal works factory where he produced transmissions, ploughs and special equipment. To do this he borrowed money from brother Jakob and his wife's uncle Heinrich Heese III. In 1895 his company was bought out by a large Belgian steel company leaving Johann as manager.

Was a silent partner in a coal mine in the eastern part of the province Ekaterinoslav

Built a house at 66 Kazatschaya Street, in the Mennonite section of the city.

July 1903 given honorary citizenship by the Czar

Now was a citizen and owned property, so he could enter civic politics

1903 elected to city council, giving up his position as manager of the steel mill

1904 manager of the Public Works Department
 1905 the mayor died, Johann appointed as mayor; confirmed by re-election in 1906
 Obtained large loan to help with public works development
 new water works and fire fighting equipment
 second street car line
 construction of a number of schools, and new market hall
 Because of rising anti-German sentiments did not seek re-election in 1909
 Was asked to supervise the construction and business management of an agricultural
 exposition which was held in Ekaterinoslav in 1910; was a success
 Was successful in most business enterprises; he had been a partner in a brick factory in
 Ekaterinoslav, managed by his brother Kornelius; about 1914 he sold out
 Outbreak of World War I in August 1914; Johann was asked to manage finances and supplies
 of the Medical Corps for the Southern Armies. This involved horse-drawn ambulances,
 trains and ships, with the supply depot in Ekaterinoslav
 Turmoil of the revolution made life difficult, but Johann re-elected as mayor in 1918. With
 German occupation of Ukraine after the end of World War I, the German commanders
 were billeted in the Esau house.
 During this time Johann played a part in the founding of the University of Ekaterinoslav;
 while not his original idea, he was the person signing the decree
 When the German troops withdrew to Germany, the Esau family went with them, leaving
 on 20 December 1918
 Using funds from the sale of their house, they were able to stay in Germany for a number
 of years, both Paul and Catherine continuing their studies
 Johann participated in the *Studienkommission*, to assess the possibility of migration to
 North America, arriving in New York 13 June 1920
 Upon return he negotiated with government officials for the benefit of the Russian Mennonite
 constituency
 On 25 October 1922 Johann, wife Margaretha, and Catherine left Germany, settling at first
 in Reedly, then in Davis, California. Son Paul completed his education in Germany,
 then joined them in 1924
 Johann died suddenly of a heart attack 14 September 1940. The funeral service was in the
 local church, and he was buried in the local cemetery
 Margarethe died 28 October 1955, also in Davis, California
 The Esau Family, Paul, wife Esther and Catherine established a fund from the Esau Estate,
 in honor of their parents, distributing substantial amounts of money to Bethel College
 in Newton, Kansas and Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg to further
 liberal arts education.

Esau, Kornelius

Younger brother of Johann Esau
 About 1903 Johann Esau and partners established a brick factory using the white sand
 on the south side of the Dniepr River
 Johann appointed his younger brother, Kornelius, to be the manager
 About 1914 the business was sold to the engineering works Mantel of Riga

Fast, Jakob Johann

Born 12 April 1822

Married Anna Heese, daughter of Heinrich Heese I

He owned a mill probably in the Chortitza Colony

Anna convinced Jakob to relocate to Ekaterinoslav, where he established a mill, possibly moving there in the late 1840s or 1850s to establish a treadmill

Children:

The best list mentions 7 children, although the records are not consistent

1. **Jakob** - born about 1846 on the Chortitza Colony
2. **Johann** - born 23 October 1849 (see separate listing)
3. **Aganeta** - born 7 January 1851, married **Issak Lehn** 30 March 1871, 7 children, the first 4 likely lived in Ekaterinoslav at some point in their lives:
Jakob (1872), **Isaak** (1873), **Anna** (1876), **Wilhelm** (1879), Aganeta (1882), Johann (1884), Katharina (1891)
Mother Aganeta died 5 August 1913
4. **Katharina** - born about 1856 in Chortitza Colony
5. **Heinrich** - born 20 October 1858, probably died about 1895-1897
Played significant role managing the mill together with his mother, likely until he died, after which his younger brother Wilhelm took over
6. **Wilhelm** - born 5 February 1864 in Ekaterinoslav, well educated in technical and business, took over management of the mill after Heinrich died, married **Eva Schroeder** 28 October 1890, then **Augustina Schroeder** 4 November 1896, altogether 5 children, all born in Ekaterinoslav:
Anna (1891), **Emma** (1893), **Wilhelm** (died as infant), **Vasily** (1898), **Nicholas** (1900)
7. **Maria** - born 11 June 1840 in Einlage, married Peter Siemens, 2 children, died in Rosenthal, Chortitza Colony

Steam-powered mill built, probably in 1866

Jakob died 6 July 1866

Under the management of Heinrich Fast the mill prospered

Mill burned down 1890

New mill built to a capacity of 5,000 pud per day

Rebuilt 1894-1897 to a larger capacity, to a larger capacity, 7,000 pud per day

After the death of Heinrich younger brother Wilhelm took over

While Wilhelm was well educated in technical and financial management, he did not manage the mill well. He made many mistakes

Mill taken over by the banks in 1911

Fast, Johann Jakob

Born 23 October 1849

Parents Heinrich Jakob Fast and Anna Heese

Older brother of the Fast brothers who were managing the Fast flour mill

Married **Katharina Isaak** 21 July 1868

She was born 22 April 1850, father Peter Isaak

Children:

1. **Anna** - born 23 February 1870, married Heinrich Wiens, 4 children, died 23 January 1919
2. **Johann** - born 28 October 1871?, married Mathilda _____, 1 adopted daughter Tamara, last seen in Poland in 1943
3. **Katharina** - married Peter Lepp, 2 children, husband died, married Jakob Schellenberg
4. **Peter** - born 24 June 1873?, married Anastasia _____, 2 children
5. **Aganetha (Agnes)** - born 22 December 1875, married Gerhard Klassen of Davidsfeld on 16 September 1895, then moved from Ekaterinoslav onto an estate, 6 children, died 16 September 1906
Gerhard remarried 9 April 1909 and had at least 3 more children
6. **Maria** - born 27 March 1879, married Abram Heinrichs 21 April 1902, lived in Einlage, 8 children, family left USSR in August 1924, arrived in Canada October 1925
7. **Agatha** - born 2 October 1880, married Semjon Tarasov, 3 children
8. **Heinrich** - born 28 December 1882, married **Susanna Janzen** on 8 October 1912, 4 children, the first 2 in Ekaterinoslav, **Olga, Johann, Eduard, Heinrich**
Father Heinrich died in exile in USSR in 1942, Susanna died in Siberia 7 December 1967
9. **Mathilde** - born 4 July 1885, married **David D Epp**, son of Elder David H Epp, 2 children: **David** (born 1912, died after a few weeks), Heinrich (born 1925 in Berdyansk), David was electrical engineer, exiled in 1937, Mathilde was a bookkeeper, to Germany 1943-1945, to Canada 1948, died 13 February 1957 in Winnipeg, Manitoba
10. **Olga** - born 24 January 1892, married David P Martens 5 August 1912, moved to Einlage, 7 children, to Canada in 1926, where the last 2 children were born, David died 1973 in Winnipeg

Started a sawmill, with careful planning a successful business

Delivered much lumber for the Fast flour mill, on a long term credit basis

When the flour mill failed Johann's financial status weakened, and creditors took over the lumber business

Johann and his son-in-law Peter Gerhard Lepp built an iron foundry

Lepp died, and it was hard to get another good manager

With the financial difficulties the foundry was scaled down to a workshop

Member of city council

Johann fast died 23 September 1908 of a stroke

Wife Katharina died in 1922 of emphysema in Ekaterinoslav

Fast, Mr

Together with a brother owner of a business about 1899

Fast, Mr

Together with a brother owner of a business about 1899

Fast, Peter

Student at the Halbstadt *Zentralschule*

Worked as a teacher and coach of Russian language at a nobleman's house

Fast, Sophie Alexander

Owned a brick factory

In 1902 employed 53 people and was evaluated at 20,000R

Somehow related to the J J Fast business

Franz, Heinrich

Completed teacher training in Prussia in 1832, obtained his diploma in 1834

Taught in *Dorfschule* in Gnadenfeld, then completed a 2 year *Kursus der Russischen Sprache* in Ekaterinoslav, likely completing it in 1845

Then went on to teach in the Chortitza *Zentralschule*

Friesen, Abram Abram

Graduate of Ohrloff *Zentralschule*, then *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav

Studied science (*Naturgeschichte*) at the New Russian University in Odessa

Taught science at the Halbstadt *Mittelschule* and *Kommerzschule*

Friesen, Gerhard Isbrandt

(age 29)

Wife **Anna** (29)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Funk, Peter H

From Neuenburg, Chortitza

Studied at the University of Moscow, faculty of law

Practiced as lawyer in the city of Ekaterinoslav; appointed as a judge

Funk, Peter Heinrich (could be the same as the above)

(age 46)

Wife **Anastasia** (38)

Mother-in-law Lukerya Digankina (62)

Children: **Peter** (9), **Irina** (2)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Hamm, Abraham Abraham

Born 30 October 1842 in Ekaterinoslav

Parents Abraham Hamm and Katharina Willms

Married **Maria Voth**, daughter of Franz Voth and Maria Heese

Maria Heese was the daughter of Heinrich Heinrich Heese I

At some point moved to Ekaterinoslav, building a steam-powered mill

After a few years liquidated it and moved back to his home community, which might have been
Einlage

Hamm, Abram

Came to Ekaterinoslav about 1828, searching for better educational opportunities

Hamm, David Hermann

Graduate of Gnadenfeld *Zentralschule*, the German teacher at the Halbstadt *Zentralschule*
starting in 1886.

Certified as a German teacher

1899 transferred to the Girls' *Gymnasium* in Uralsk, then in 1909 to Girls' *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav

Hamm, Gerhard Christian

(see biography in the Alexandrovsk p 53)

Born 22 April 1883 in Chortitza, Chortitza

Parents Christian Hamm and Maria Hamm

Technical training in Germany; he also went to the United States to study American industry

Worked as engineer for the Abram Koop Factory in Schoenwiese

Married Katharina Rempel: 2 children, Christian Gerhard (1916), Katharina (1918-1920)

Wife died 1920

Married Anna Koop 9 July 1923: 1 child, Marguerite (1926), who married Wilhelm Bergmann

Together with his friend Peter Dyck, Kornelius Pauls and others, worked as an engineer on the first combine produced in the Soviet Union, working for the Factory "Kommunar" in Schoenwiese (the nationalized Koop Factory)

For this they (a total of 11 people) and the factory, after examination by Kalinin himself, received the Order of Lenin 3 September 1931

On 8 April 1937, 11 of the leading people from the factory were accused of being enemies of the people, were arrested and jailed in Zaporozhye

Specific accusation against Gerhard was that he took part in a counter-revolutionary diversion organization

They were sentenced on 16 September, and executed 17 September in Dnepropetrovsk

On 6 May 1958 Gerhard was declared "rehabilitated." There had not been sufficient evidence to convict him.

Gerhard's picture is now displayed in the pyramid of pictures of people who have suffered atrocities at the hands of the Soviets under Stalin, found in the Dmitri Yavornitzki Historical Museum in Dnepropetrovsk

Hamm, Heinrich

Wife **Anna Schroeder**

Children:

Woldemar - born 1923

Heinz - born 1925

Heinrich worked in a government-run credit union

The family lived in rooms rented from Heinrich Toews, at Sverdlovskaya Street No 41

With the Soviet Army driving back the German Army in 1943, the family was sent to the Warthegau area of Poland and then Germany

The parents migrated to Canada in 1948

Heinz was drafted into the German Army, was captured and turned over to the Russians by the American Army, according to the Yalta Agreement. He was a prisoner in Magadan, then freed in 1956. He lived in Novosibirsk, then came to Canada in 1965

Hamm, Johann Abram

Address: Elisavetgradskaya 63, Ekaterinoslav

Asked for food drafts through pages of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* 17 May 1922 p 6

Looking for Abram Hamm, Ohio, USA

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Johann Abram Hamm (age 31), wife **Elisabeth Peter** (30), daughter **Anna** (9)

Heese, Heinrich I

Born 14 October 1787 in Pommerndorf, Prussia; strict Christian upbringing; Lutheran

Probably had a fairly good general education

Fled to avoid Napoleon's recruiters, came to Ekaterinoslav in 1808, finding hospitality in the
home of the Heinrich Thiessens

Converted to Mennonite faith

Taught at a Russian nobleman's home for 3 years, so he could learn Russian

Married **Katharina Penner** 2 February 1810; she was born 30 March 1791

She had also recently come from Prussia, and had found hospitality in the Heinrich
Thiessen home. Children:

1. **Helena** - born 16 February 1811, died 2 January 1812
2. **Heinrich** - born 5 July 1813, died 25 May 1815
3. Maria - born 28 March 1815, died 1 August 1815
4. Katharina - born 27 May 1816, married a Mr Fast, had 3 children, died by 1867
5. Maria - born 28 February 1818 in Einlage, married widower Franz Voth, 10 children,
died 4 September 1889. Oldest child of this couple was Maria, who married
Abraham Hamm. A son Heinrich had helped in the family business.
6. Elisabeth - born 11 December 1819, married Martin Riediger, 8 children, died
15 December 1902, had sons Heinrich and Peter
7. Helena - born 23 March 1822, died 25 December 1823
8. Agatha - born 17 November 1823, married a Penner who died, then married Abraham
Unrau who was secretary of the Chortitza *Gebietsamt*, 6 children,
died 17 December 1883
9. Anna - born 29 January 1826, married Jakob Fast, mill owner in Linden, 3 children,
Jakob died 1866 (cholera), she died 23 October 1909; son Peter was a mill
owner in Ekaterinoslav
10. Heinrich II - born 16 February 1828, married Maria Thiessen, 10 children, mill owner
and banker, died 18 June 1883 in Ekaterinoslav (see separate listing)
11. Johann - born 22 December 1829, married Helena Dyck, 8 children, died
19 January 1892
12. Jakob - born 15 May 1833, died 14 June 1833

Wife Katharina died 3 June 1833, likely complications of childbirth

Married Anna Martens 13 October 1844. Further children:

13. Helena - born 22 May 1845, married Abraham Friesen 1865, 1 child, date of death
unknown
14. Wilhelm - born 26 June 1846, married Maria Fast, 4 children, died 25 March 1920
15. Jakob - born 27 December 1848, well educated, curved spine, died December 1919
16. Franz - born 28 March 1850, died 24 April 1850
17. Wilhelmine - born 11 June 1851, died 29 June 1852

18. Franz - born 6 June 1852, died 13 July 1852
19. Henriette - born 2 July 1853, married a Mr Friesen, died 3 December 1876
20. Wilhelmine - born 15 July 1854, died 16 December 1854
21. Wilhelmine - born 8 December 1855, married Peter Fast, who owned a steam-powered mill in Chortitza, date of death unknown
22. Margareta - born 13 April 1857, died 11 October 1860

Moved to Chortitza to be the secretary of the local government

He was secretary at various positions, and taught in the Chortitza and Molotschna Colonies

Was involved in the establishment of the Chortitza Zentalschule in 1840

Forced to take Russian Teachers' Examination in Ekaterinoslav in 1849, and passed

Died 12 April 1868 in Einlage, Chortitza Colony

Heese, Heinrich Heinrich II

Born 16 February 1828

Tenth child of Heinrich Heese I and Katharina Penner, the first surviving boy

Married **Maria Thiessen**, granddaughter of the original Heinrich Thiessen, in 1845

She was born 17 September 1823 in Ekaterinoslav

Her parents were Heinrich Thiessen and Margareta Siemens

Children were:

1. Heinrich - born 19 November 1846, married Agatha Lepp, 3 children, he died 3 March 1903 (see separate entry Heinrich Heinrich Heese III)
2. Margareta - born 29 September 1848, married Jakob Toews, 6 children, died of complications of a broken hip which she sustained when a wagon turned over (see separate listing Jakob Heinrich Toews)
3. **Maria** - born 1 February 1851, died 7 June 1851
4. **Peter** - born 2 June 1852, married Helena Schroeder, no children, educator, died 1 February 1911 in Ekaterinoslav (see separate listing and biography)
5. **Maria** - born 1 January 1855, married David Sudermann of Taschtschenak, 9 children, died 23 May 1933 in Chortitza
 Eldest child was **Maria**, born 30 March 1878, she married **Aron Peter Toews**, who was born 28 January 1887 in Fuerstenau
 Children: **Natalie** - born 16 May 1912 in Alexeyevka
 Olga - born 23 March 1913 in Ekaterinoslav
 Nikolai - born 9 May 1918 in Nikopol
 Maria - born 6 March 1920 in Nikopol
6. **Katharina** - born 20 August 1857, married Johann Sudermann of Neuteich Estate on 8 May 1877, 8 children, the eldest of whom was Katharina, born 20 March 1880 in Ekaterinoslav, the others all born on Neuteich Estate, she died 12 October 1921 in Gruenfeld
7. **Johann** - born 6 November 1859, died 22 April 1863 in Ekaterinoslav
8. Susanna - born 7 March 1862, married Jacob Toews in 1881, 2 children, Jacob died, married Dr Jakob Esau in 1886, 6 children, she died 18 October 1950 in Canada (see listing under Jakob Esau)
9. Jakob - born 31 July 1865, married Sophie Trinkler of Kharkov, 3 children, he was a

lawyer, died June 1921 (see separate listing Jakob Heinrich Heese)
10. Elisabeth - born 7 December 1867, married David Klassen, 6 children, died
17 January 1948 in Culross, Manitoba

First built a treadmill, which resulted in a good profit; later destroyed by fire
Went into the grain market; no one wanted to buy Russian grain after the Crimean War, so he
lost most of his possessions
Was enterprising, so with his brother-in-law (likely Johann Thiessen), in the late 1860s,
built the first steam-powered mill in South Russia; the machinery came from England
Later the 2 owners separated
Heinrich then worked as a lawyer, real estate agent and banker
Wife Maria died 1 September 1896 in Ekaterinoslav
Heinrich died 18 June 1883 in Ekaterinoslav

Heese, Heinrich Heinrich III

Born 19 November 1846 in Ekaterinoslav
First child of Heinrich Heinrich Heese II and Maria Thiessen
Married **Agatha Lepp** on 10 September 1872
Agatha was born 3 January 1845, daughter of Peter Lepp of Chortitza

Children:

1. Heinrich - born 29 July 1875, died 27 December 1944 in Lodz, Poland
(see separate listing Heinrich Heinrich Heese IV)
2. **Peter** - born 22 February 1878, married **Katharina Toews** of Ekaterinoslav
Children: **Alexander** (1902), **Sergius** (1904), **Olga** (1911) all born in

Ekaterinoslav

Migrated to Canada in 1923, first settling on a farm in Elbow, Saskatchewan
Then to Steinbach, Manitoba, where they grew raspberries and raised chickens
Wrote *Yekaterinoslaw*, a history and description of Ekaterinoslav

Peter died 7 October 1947 of tuberculosis, Katharina died 3 November 1951 in
Steinbach

3. **Jakob** - born 19 December 1880, died in infancy

Heinrich in 1878 built his own flour mill, and enlarged it in 1892

This steam-powered complex was built on the corner of Ekaterininsky Prospekt and
Fabrichnaya Street

The building had brick walls, metal roofs and large windows

The Heese residence was located on the property

Was a member of the boards of a number of private banks and the federal bank

Agatha died 20 February 1884

Heinrich died 3 March 1903 of "galloping consumption" (fast-advancing tuberculosis)

Heese, Heinrich Heinrich IV

Born 29 July 1875

Eldest child of Heinrich Heinrich Heese III and Agatha Lepp

Took over the mill owned by his father, and after alterations brought the milling capacity to
4,500 pud per day

During some of this time Peter Heinrich Heese was a silent partner in the mill ownership

The mill was nationalized after the Revolution
Presumably stayed in Russia, eventually was escaping from Russia on the Great Trek, when
he died 27 December 1944 in Lodz (Litzmannstadt) Poland
The Heese mill building no longer exists

Heese, Jakob Heinrich

Born 31 July 1865 in Ekaterinoslav
Parents Heinrich Heinrich Heese II and Maria Thiessen
Studied law at the University of Kharkov
Married **Sophie Trinkler** of Kharkov 28 December 1889
Children:

1. **Boris** - born 3 June 1891, died 4 June 1891
2. **Vera** - born 14 July 1895, died 26 December 1895
3. **Victor** - born 20 April 1897, married Antonia Suchodolskaya in 1920,
said to be a movie star in Moscow, under the name of "Stanitzep"
Other sources say he was an actor with the Moscow Children's Theatre
With a commissioner he presented the wishes of the Mennonite churches to
the Kerensky government in 1917

Practiced as lawyer in Ekaterinoslav

After the 1904/1905 promises of the government for reform, meetings were held to deal with
some of the issues, and prepare for Duma elections

Jakob Heese, "President of the Lawyers Association" chaired a meeting to deal with
these questions. He was, however, politically inexperienced. Only 2 Mennonites were
elected into the national duma, although 4 were elected to city council

Devoted himself to youth work in the church

For many years an excellent choral director

Divorced, Jakob remarried, **Mrs Meta Pahl**

Jakob died of throat cancer June 1921

Heese, Peter Heinrich

(see biography Peter Heinrich Heese p 170)

Born 2 June 1852 in Ekaterinoslav

Parents Heinrich Heinrich Heese II and Maria Thiessen, granddaughter of the original Heinrich
Thiessen

Educated in Chortitza *Zentralschule*, then *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav

Further 2 semesters of education at the University of Moscow

1877-1878 taught in Gnadenfeld, thereafter in Ohrloff, the 1878-1879 in Ohrloff

Co-president with Johann Klatt of the *Vereinsschule* in Ohrloff

Married **Helena Schroeder** 6 September 1879; she was born 17 February 1854

Through this marriage he became owner of Ober-Maitshokrak Estate

Member of Molotschna Mennonite School Board 1880-1896

From 1884-1896 alternately with Johann Klatt, president of the Board

In the cause of education an excellent promoter and counselor

Because all of his ideas were not carried out he withdrew from the school board in 1896
and became bitter; wife also died 9 January 1896

Sold estate in 1898; 1903 moved to Ekaterinoslav; part owner of a mill with nephew,
Heinrich Heinrich Heese IV

Active in philanthropy both to Mennonites and surrounding Russians

In 1906 published a Russian newspaper in Ekaterinoslav

Died in 1 February 1911

Heese, Wilhelm Johann

Born 14 August 1866

Parents Johann Heese and Helene Dyck

Married **Maria Toews** 29 August 1892

She was born 6 December 1874

Maria's parents were Jakob Heinrich Toews and Margaretha Heese

Children:

1. **Vladimir** - born 20 July 1893, married Justina von Kampen 14 October 1918,
1 daughter, died 1922
2. **Georg** - born 4 September 1896, died 27 November 1907
3. **Nicolai** - born 28 February 1900, married Anna Pridvorov in 1921, left Russia in
1921, 1 adopted daughter
4. **Margaretha** - born 3 December 1902, died 7 October 1903
5. **Wanda** - born 23 July 1905, to Canada, married Nick Wall 15 June 1929 in Kitchener,
Ontario, no children
6. **Dietrich** - born 19 March 1909, married Elisabeth Janzen, 4 children, Elisabeth died
in 1954, Dietrich married Agatha Regehr

Wilhelm was manager, then he, together with a relative, took over the agency of a sewing
machine company "Dnvis"

He then rented a mill in the district of Poltava, then turned it back

He built a large modern mill on the left bank of the Dniepr, but this venture did not succeed

Then built another mill on the "Blisnetay" Station (part of Ekaterinoslav?)

Apparently after the Pogrom of October 1905 the Jewish financiers were unwilling to lend
money to other businesses, so Wilhelm sold out

They left Ekaterinoslav in 1915, moving to Lozovaya, where they owned a steam-driven
flour mill

He died 19 February 1920 of typhus

In 1921 Maria with the 2 youngest children fled to Riga, then to Germany

Spent 2 years in refugee camp Lager Lechfeld

Finally to Canada, settling on a farm near Grunthal, Manitoba

She brought along a silk taffeta dress, originally sewn in the 1890s

Wife Maria married widower Jacob Wieler in 1929

She died 22 September 1965 in Coaldale, Alberta

Heinrichs, Ksenia Abram

(age 45)

Children: **Maria** (22), **Abram** (17), **Ernst** (15), **Erika** (14), **Katharina** (14), **Gertruda** (10)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Heinrichs, Peter Jakob

(age 27)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Hoeppner, Jakob

Born 3 January 1748 in Bohnsack, Prussia

Jakob Hoeppner and Johann Bartsch were chosen to explore South Russia at the invitation of Catherine the Great to see if it would be suitable for Mennonite settlement

Injured his leg when the carriage overturned near St Petersburg

Lead the first settlers to South Russia, arriving in 1789, but location of settlement changed by the Russian authorities

Settlers dissatisfied, and also accused Hoeppner of financial irregularities

Hoeppner was expelled from the Flemish congregation, arrested and jailed in Ekaterinoslav

He was to be deported to Siberia, but after 1 year in jail was freed with the general amnesty when Alexander I became Czar in 1801

Property not returned to him. Died quietly 4 May 1826, and was buried on Chortitza Island

Hooze, Peter Peter

Address: Nadeshdinskaya 30, Ekaterinoslav

Asked for food drafts through pages of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* 17 May 1922 p 6

Looking for Heinrich Janzen, Kansas and Bernhard Rempel, Butterfield, Minnesota

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Father Peter Peter (age 41), wife **Katharina Abram** (40), children: **Katharina** (18),
Abram (17), **Maria** (15), **Peter** (11), **Olga** (9)

Klassen, David D

Born about 1899

Refugee who immigrated from Ekaterinoslav to Rosthern, Saskatchewan in 1924,
Mennonitische Rundschau Refugee list No 864

Klassen, Helena Abram

(age 56)

Children: **Abram Johann** (35), **Katharina Jakob** (27), **Valentina Abram**

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Klassen, Isaak Johann

(age 25)

Wife **Elisabeth Abram** (27)

Children: **Erika** (2), **Elfriede** (1 mo)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Klassen, Jakob Abraham

Born 16 August 1847

Parents Abraham Klassen and Anna Martens

Married **Agnes Sudermann** on 16 July 1875

She was born 5 October 1850 in Taschtschenak

Children:

1. **Anna** - born 2 May 1876 in Ekaterinoslav
2. **Katharina** - born 8 July 1877
3. **Agnes** - born 25 March 1883
4. Peter - born 23 May 1888 in Chortitza
5. Johann - born 29 April 1891 in Einlage

Graduate of Chortitza Zentralschule, teacher was Heinrich Epp

Village school teacher 1864-1872, rested for one year because of his health

Taught in Ekaterinoslav school 1873-1881; his was considered to be a model school

Many students could transfer directly from his school to the fifth class of the *Gymnasium*

With his knowledge he far outstripped other village teachers

He also led the church services and read the sermons

After 1881 two years' rest because of his health, after that taught at Chortitza *Zentralschule*

1895 teacher of Religion and German language at the Chortitza *Maedchenschule*, likely until at least 1910

Jakob died 16 December 1919 in Chortitza

Agnes died 18 December 1934 in Chortitza

Klassen, Johann

Teacher of Religion at Chortitza *Zentralschule*

Appointed as minister and school teacher in 1912, until 1918

Klassen, Peter Johann

(age 38)

Wife **Anna** (29)

Children: **Maria** (18), **Eugenie** (12), **Johann** (12), **Sinaida** (10)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Klassen, Wilhelm J

Probably the same Wilhelm Klassen who was later a factory owner in Melitopol

Studied in the Institute of Mining in Ekaterinoslav, trained as engineer

Originally from Neu-Halbstadt, then moved to Melitopol

Co-owner with Jakob J Klassen of a factory producing agricultural machinery and equipment, established in 1886

Not certain, but probably his wife was **Elisabeth Esau**, sister of mayor Johann Esau of Ekaterinoslav and Jakob Esau the ophthalmologist

October of 1916 the Klassen factory was making a lot of machine guns, mines and shrapnel

Wilhelm died June 1919

Lepp, Johann Gerhard

From Chortitza/Schoenwiese, son of Gerhard Lepp, who was a son of Peter Lepp, founder of the large firm, Lepp & Wallmann

Graduated from *Realschule*, then the Technical College of Ekaterinoslav

Then back to his home in 1879 to be part owner and manager to work in the family business, Lepp & Wallmann

Liebig, August

Abram Unger, of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Chortitza had asked August Liebig of Hamburg, Germany, to help the struggling MB Church in the 1860s
The Chortitza Administrative authorities had Liebig arrested, sent to Ekaterinoslav, then to Odessa, then expelled out of the country

Loewen, Abram Heinrich

(age 43)

Wife **Maria Kornelius** (40)

Children: **Heinrich** (10), **Kornelius** (6), **Gerhard** (4)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Loewen, Johann Heinrich

Wife **Katharina**

Son **Victor**

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Loewen, Johann J

Born 1871 in the Yazykovo Colony, South Russia

At the age of 15 moved to Friedensfeld with his parents

Interested in poetry and music

In 1897 married neighbour's daughter, Helene Friesen. They settled in Blumenfeld of the Nepluyevka Colony

Had 6 children; Anna, Johann, Heinrich and Nikolai (1910), two others died in early childhood

Johann founded a choir in their church, remaining the conductor for 30 years

Published 300- page book of poetry in 1899 "*Herzenstoene fuer schlichte Christen-Herzen*"

Collaborated with Bernhard Dueck in writing hymns

Tried to, but were unable to migrate in 1929

Appointed gardener on a collective farm

Arrested and sent to jail in Nikopol three times, but was freed

June 1937 again arrested. Visited by son Nikolai, but this soon stopped

Tortured, eventually "confessed" to destroying vineyards on the collective farm

Son Nikolai also imprisoned. They together with a nephew were transferred, and not seen again. Were all three likely shot, probably in Dnepropetrovsk, 29 October 1937

Loewen, Nikolai Johann

Born 1910, parents Johann L Loewen and Helene Friesen

Married Anna Wiebe in Friedensfeld 1 December 1929

Nikolai worked as an assistant to a veterinarian

Went to Nikopol and Kharkov to study as a veterinarian, but because of difficult circumstances was not able to complete his studies

Worked as a veterinarian in Friedensfeld

Three children: Harry (1930), Johann (Hans) (1934) and Helena (Leni) (1937)

His family stayed in Friedensfeld during the time of his studies

Arrested September 1937, to prison in Nikopol, transferred to Dnepropetrovsk prison

and shot 29 October 1937

Wife and children eventually reached Canada

Martens, Agnes Hermann

(age 37)

Children: **Helena** (17), **Hermann** (15), **Maria** (12), **Lydia** (11), **Agnes** (9), **Melita** (6),
Erna (2)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Martens, Heinrich Wilhelm

(age 56)

Wife **Justina Peter** (50)

Children: **Jakob** (14), **Anna** (12)

Relative **Katharina Heinrich Dueck** (71)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Martens, Maria K

Called Widow Kornelius Martens nee Maria K Heinrichs

Address: Sadovaya 17, Ekaterinoslav

Asked for food drafts through pages of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* 17 May 1922 p 6

Looking for Benjamin Becker and Abram Neufeld, Canada

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Maria Kornelius Martens (age 58), Children: **Peter** (36), **Abram** (30), **Justina** (20),
Heinrich (18), **Julius** (14), Grandchildren: **Anna Epp** (10), **Hulda Epp** (7)

Martens, Peter

Teacher for a brief time in the Mennonite elementary school, likely around 1886-1889

Neufeld, Heinrich

One of the four Chortitza Mennonite Brethren leaders who were arrested 12 July 1862 and
jailed for 2 weeks in Ekaterinoslav

Born 1819 in Schoenhorst, Chortitza Colony

Baptized and joined the MB Church 4 March 1862

Was teacher and minister, lived in Einlage

Neumann, Eduard

Owned a business in Ekaterinoslav in 1902, evaluated at 45,000R; it employed 15 people

Neustaedter, Paul Abram

(age 34)

Wife **Maria Daniel** (33)

Children: **Abram** (13), **Heinrich** (11), **Paul** (8), **Daniel** (5), **Friedrich** (2)

Address: Elisavetgradskaya 63, Ekaterinoslav

Asked for food drafts through pages of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* 17 May 1922 p 6

Looking for H Friedman, 24 Mott St Worcester, Massachusetts

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Neustaedter, Peter Peter

(age 40)

Wife **Justina Johann** (44)

Children: **Justina** (18), **Peter Peter** (16), **Anna** (13)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Nickel, Franz Johann

(age 37)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Niebuhr, Jakob

Youngest son of miller Hermann Niehuhr

Born 4 May 1862, likely in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony

Studied in Secondary School in Ekaterinoslav (probably *Gymnasium*), completing his
studies in 1879

Then went back to join his father in the family business

Pauls, Kornelius

Kornelius Pauls was also an engineer with the Factory Kommunar, and also received the
Order of Lenin, together with others, on 3 September 1931

Lived in Einlage, had a wife, but no children

Also together with others, was among the 11 leading people of the factory who were accused
of being enemies of the people, and arrested; some of the others were Peter Dyck and
Gerhard Christian Hamm

Also sentenced on 16 September, and executed 17 September in Dnepropetrovsk

Penner, Heinrich Heinrich

(age 28)

Wife **Elisabeth Heinrich** (26)

Brother-in-law **David Heinrich Unger** (14)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Penner, Wilhelm Wilhelm

Born about 1858

From Chortitza Colony

The "Alexander Stipend" paid for Mennonite students to study outside of the Mennonite
colonies

The Esau brothers were sent from the Molotschna, Wilhelm Wilhelm Penner from the
Chortitza Colony

Penner went to a *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav, completing his studies in 1874

Taught Russian in the Chortitza *Zentralschule* 1874-1881

Then moved to Ekaterinoslav, and together with his brother-in-law Jakob Heinrich Toews
built a flour mill

Jakob Toews died soon after, in 1883, but Penner carried on the business.

Eventually the mill went bankrupt

Peters, Franz Franz

(age 42)

Wife **Aganetha Abram** (37)

Children: **Agnes** (16), **Abram** (14), **Woldemar** (12), **Franz** (9), **Melita** (7), **Margaretha** (3)

Relative: **Margaretha Abram Wieler** (33)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Peters, Peter

From Chortitza

Studied medicine at the University of Odessa

Practiced in Ekaterinoslav and Gruenfeld

Married Maria Esau June 1916, 2 children

Exiled, and likely died 1938

(see also Maria Esau)

Petkau, Peter Peter

(age 34)

Wife **Maria Jakob** (25)

Children: **Peter** (12), **Jakob** (10), **Rudolf** (2)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Reimer, Mr

Member of city council

Rempel, Jakob Aron

(see biography Moscow chapter p 269)

Born in Heuboden, Borozenko

Predigerschule in Switzerland

Taught in various *Gymnasiums*, including Nikopol 1916-1918

Married Maria Sudermann, she died 19 August 1918

They had 2 children:

Alexander - born 26 May 1915

Eleonore - born 20 March 1918

Appointed assistant professor of German at the Mining Institute of Ekaterinoslav in 1918 and
lecturer in the newly founded University of Ekaterinoslav; also appointed by the
University of Moscow

Completed a 3-volume German grammar textbook

Appointed as minister of the Mennonite congregation in 1918

Confirmed as elder 2 May 1920

When he would not give up his church work and appointment, his position at the university
was rescinded

Moved to Gruenfeld, married Sophie Sudermann, had another 5 children, all born in Gruenfeld

Held various positions in the Mennonite community

Arrested and jailed in 1929

Eventually was executed 11 September 1941

Riediger, Peter Martin

Born 16 January 1856

Father Martin Riediger, grandfather Heinrich Heese I

Chortitza *Zentralschule*, *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav, likely about 1870-1874

Further studies in Halberstadt in Prussia, where the director was Karl Kehr

Teacher in Chortitza *Zentralschule* in Religion and German 1879-1892, and evangelist

Died 10 October 1916 in Berdyansk, of a stroke

Schellenberg, Bernhard Paul

Passed his *Feldscheer* (assistant medical officer) examinations in Ekaterinoslav, so he likely studied there as well

He was the first doctor in the Chortitza Colony

Schroeder, David Isaak

Born 20 Oct 1776, died 1834

Wife **Aganetha (Agnes?)** (nee Kliever) born 21 July 1785, died 1840

Children: **Katharina, Anna, Johann, David**

First to the Molotschna in 1804, then to Ekaterinoslav 1805 or a little later

In the wood business in Ekaterinoslav

Sold his enterprise some time before 1823, and with horse and wagon took his whole family south to look for land

He purchased large tracts of land around and south of Melitopol, bought 3000 dess

Started the wealthy Schroeder estate dynasty

Died 1834, wife then managed the estate until she died in 1840

Thiessen, Dietrich Kornelius

(see biography Dietrich Kornelius Thiessen p 173)

Born 27 December 1870 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony; father Kornelius Otto Tiessen

Trained as an architect in Germany

Married **Julie Johanna Martens**, daughter of estate owner Johann Johann Martens, on 15 August 1903 in Ekaterinoslav

Children:

1. **Konstantin** - born 12 July 1904, married, eventually farmed in Uzbekistan, died 4 March 1983 in Peszchanni, Uzbekistan

2. **Victor** - born 8 April 1906, executed 1941 in Leningrad, where he was studying art

3. **Paul** - born 10 December 1907, died about 1922 in their dacha, of a gun accident

4. **Elsa** - born 9 February 1912, married, likely after 1937, at least one daughter, to Germany 1996, alive 2004

5. **Hermann** - born 28 August 1914, executed 1939, likely in Baku

Dietrich worked as an architect in Ekaterinoslav, for various agencies, mostly the railway, but also accepted private projects

To Batum in 1932, then to Baku

Dietrich was arrested as a fascist spy 1 September 1937, and executed 16 September 1937

Wife Julie and Elsa were in a number of concentration camps around Novosibirsk

Julie died in a concentration camp about 1945

Elsa eventually migrated to Germany in 1996, and was alive in 2004

Thiessen, Heinrich

Born 1755 (1759?) in Prussia

Married **Maria Woelk** in Prussia about 1784. She was born 1867

Came to the Molotschna Colony in 1804, but then soon after decided to go to the Chortitza Colony, and then by 1805 in Ekaterinoslav, one of the first Mennonites to settle in an urban centre in Russia

The eldest 2 children elected to stay in the Molotschna

Children:

1. **Dietrich** - born 1785 in Prussia, married Judith Bergen, had 4 children, remained in the Molotschna, many of his children lived in Klippenfeld
2. **Katharina** - born 1788 in Prussia, stayed in the Molotschna
3. **Maria** - born 1791
4. **Heinrich** - born 12 August 1794 in Prussia, came to Ekaterinoslav with parents, and continued in the business (see separate listing Heinrich Heinrich Thiessen)
5. **Helena** - born 4 April 1797 in Prussia, came to Ekaterinoslav with parents, married a widower **David Epp** on 1 February 1816, no record of children, died 14 April 1864
6. **Jakob** - born 8 April 1801 in Prussia, came to Ekaterinoslav with parents, married Helena Siemens 21 April 1822, 5 children, Jakob died 17 November 1834. Widow Helena remarried and had another 7 children, she died 18 August 1887 in Chortitza

In 1805 the Heinrich Thiessen family was operating a vinegar distillery and a treadmill; this mill had an output of 8 sacks of flour a day later a steam mill

They later built a much larger mill

The Thiessen business flourished and operated for at least 110 years, becoming the oldest enterprise in the city of Ekaterinoslav as well as in the whole province

Maria Woelk died 30 March 1833 in Ekaterinoslav

Heinrich Thiessen died 4 July 1838 in Ekaterinoslav

Thiessen, Heinrich Heinrich

Born 12 August 1794 in Prussia

Parents Heinrich Thiessen and Maria Woelk

With the parents to the Molotschna in 1804, then to Ekaterinoslav in 1805

Involved with the family milling business

Married **Margareta Siemens** in 1817; she was born 2 February 1799 (1800?)

Children:

1. **Katharina** - born 4 October 1818, married Gerhard Wiens of Ohrloff, 3 children, died 1900-1906
2. **Heinrich** - born 17 August 1820, died 19 February 1844
3. **Peter** - born 30 September 1822, died 20 October 1822
4. **Maria** - born 17 September 1823, married Heinrich Heinrich Heese II, 10 children (see entry under Heinrich Heinrich Heese II)
5. **Peter** - born 25 March 1826, married Helena Kaetler 6 November 1847, lived in Alt-Hochfeld, 9 children, died 28 October 1906

6. **Dietrich** - born 22 February 1828, died 9 May 1836 in Ekaterinoslav
7. **Jakob** - born 15 February 1830 probably in Ekaterinoslav, married Widow Katharina Peters (nee Martens), daughter of wealthy estate owner Wilhelm Aron Martens on 25 November 1848, likely lived in Schoenau, 9 children, wife died, married Widow Aganetha Wiens (nee Epp), another 6 children, he died 6 March 1905 in Hochfeld
8. **Johann** - born 19 March 1832, married **Helene Epp** in 1855, lived in Ekaterinoslav, 4 children, Johann died 17 July 1898 in Ekaterinoslav, Helene died 12 August 1912 in Ekaterinoslav
Children:
 1. **Heinrich** - died age 17
 2. **Margarethe** - born 1856, married Johann Schroeder, 1 daughter, died 1934
 3. Johann - born 1861 (see separate listing Johann Johann Thiessen)
 4. **Helene** - born 21 September 1872, married Heinrich Janzen of Orechov, 6 children, died 1960 in Winnipeg
9. **Margareta** - born 19 April 1834 in Ekaterinoslav, married Gerhard Klassen in 1854, lived in Blumenort, 10 children, died March 1909 in Bergfeld
10. **Helena** - born 22 July 1836, married Johann Wiens in Halbstadt, 4 children, grandson Johann Johann Wiens was killed in a train accident in Moscow 8 November 1929
11. **Julius** - born 14 January 1839, died 11 April 1840
12. **Julius** - born 25 August 1842, died 11 March 1843
13. **Susanna** - born 13 February 1834, married Wilhelm Johann Martens on 5 September 1863, 7 children, died 25 March 1930 in Waterloo, Ontario

Heinrich Heinrich Thiessen died 28 February (September?) 1859

Wife Margareta died in 1882

Thiessen, Johann Johann

Born 1861

Parents Johann Thiessen and Helene Epp

Married **Maria Schroeder** in 1891

Maria was daughter of Peter H Schroeder of Taschtschenak region

Children:

1. **Johann**
2. **Konstantin**

Maria died 1894, Johann married **Helene Schroeder**, born 12 July 1876

Children:

3. **Nikolai** - born 1898, murdered 1918
4. **Kondordie** - born 1900, married Helene Penner
5. **Maria** - born 1902, married Peter J Klassen in 1923, 3 children
6. **Wilhelm** - 1905, died in infancy
7. **Alexandra** - born 1908, married Nikolai Peters, 3 children

Johann was a member of city council

He was on the Constitution Committee of Bethania Hosptial
About 1904 was the chairman of the *Suedrussischer Abteilung des Allrussischen Muellerverbands* (South Russian division of the All Russian Organization of Millers)
Took over management of the Thiessen mill when his father died in 1898
His residence was on the same plot of land as the mill
For his service during the Russo-Japanese War he was given a medal of the Medical Corps
Johann was said to be the first in the region to have a telephone
Wife Helene died December 1909
Johann died 1919 in Ekaterinoslav

Tiessen, Maria Johann

(age19)

Sister **Alexandra** (13)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Toews, Heinrich

Wife **Margaretha (Greta)**

Owned a building at Sverdlovskaya No 41

The Heinrich Hamm family rented a suite in the building, starting about 1933

About 1936 Heinrich Toews died

Toews, Heinrich Jakob

Born 1 April 1819 (1817?) likely in Ekaterinoslav

Parents Jakob Toews and Aganetha Epp

Married **Margaretha Loewen** 2 December 1837 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony

She was born 15 October 1819 in the Chortitza Colony

Children:

1. **Johann** - born 24 December 1841 in Einlage (see separate listing Johann Heinrich Toews)
2. **Jakob** - born 1 February 1845 in Einlage (see separate listing Jakob Heinrich Toews)
3. **Katharina** - born 12 September 1854 in Einlage, married Wilhelm Penner 5 May 1874, 5 children, lived in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony, died 15 November 1882
4. _____
5. _____

Owned a windmill in Ekaterinoslav between 1836 and 1837

Moved back to Einlage, where he operated a windmill from 1840 to 1848, then a treadmill 1849-1857

Moved back to Ekaterinoslav in 1857 with his wife and 5 children; he bought the property of

Johann Fast on the Prospect and had it enlarged

Built a treadmill in Ekaterinoslav in 1857

Built a steam-powered mill in 1867

Died spring of 1867

Toews, Jakob Johann

Born 28 March 1768, in Koczelitzke, Gross Werder, Prussia

Parents:

Johann Toews, born 28 November 1743, farmer, died 9 December 1841 in Koczelitzke
Widow Anna Andres (nee Stoesz) born 22 June 1730 in Gross Mausdorf
first marriage to Cornelius Andres, 2 children, Anna and Cornelius
second marriage to Johann Toews, 9 more children, Jakob was the fourth child
of the second marriage

Anna died 12 February 1783 in Koczelitzke; Johann married again, Anna Wiebe
Wife **Aganetha Epp** born about 1782 (name in register spelled Agneta)
First lived in Barlenz, then later in Wargels
Children:

1. **Jakob** - born 1 March 1801
2. **Aganetha** - born 8 April 1803 in Prussia, married Johann Fast, 7 children, the eldest of which was Jakob Fast, who married Anna Heese, died 8 April 1862
3. **Johann** - born about 1804
4. **Helena** - born about 1811
5. Heinrich - born 1 April 1819 (1817?) (see listing Heinrich Jakob Toews)

Jakob and family moved from Prussia to Russia some time after 1803, certainly by 1804. They may have originally settled in the Chortitza Colony, but then were in Ekaterinoslav by 1805

Was among the first Mennonites settling in an urban centre in Russia - same year as Heinrich Thiessen

In 1805 Jakob Toews bought a house with a garden and buildings in Ekaterinoslav from a mechanic Ivan Schmidt. That year he complained about a theft from his house and garden

In 1806 Toews complained about soldiers of the garrison battalion stealing some property. He also asked for a loan of 560 R for ten years

In 1807 had a Dutch windmill which was burned down, likely arson

In 1814 leased a house to someone in Ekaterinoslav

In 1816 he, wife and 4 children wished to be registered with the Mennonites of Molochansk, but then were transferred to the jurisdiction of Chortitza in 1817

Not sure when Jakob or wife Aganetha died

Toews, Jakob Heinrich

Born 1 February 1845 in Einlage

Parents Heinrich Toews and Margaretha Loewen

Married **Margaretha Heese**, daughter of Heinrich Heese II and Maria Thiessen

Children:

1. **Heinrich** - born 10 September 1869, died 10 January 1888
2. Margaretha - born 4 November 1870, married Johann Esau, 4 children, eventually to the USA, where she died in 1955 (see listing Johann Jakob Esau)
3. **Jakob** - born 3 February 1872, married Aganetha Janzen 1 June 1899, 8 children, he died 16 December 1940
4. Maria - born 6 December 1874, married Wilhelm Heese 29 August 1892, 6 children, Wilhelm died 19 February 1920 of typhus, Maria married widower Jakob Wieler, she died 22 September 1965 in Coaldale, Alberta (see listing for

Wilhelm Johann Heese)

5. **Johann** - born 25 November 1876, died 28 October 1877

6. **Katharina** - born 20 September 1878, married **Charles Vieu** on 3 July 1910, he was a French Huguenot, 4 children: **Louis, Charlotte**, Marguerite, Jaqueline
They eventually moved to France, possibly Paris

Together with brother Johann owned a large steam-powered flour mill constructed in 1868
In 1880 Jakob constructed his own mill together with his brother-in-law Wilhelm Penner
Margaretha died 5 May 1880 of complications of a broken leg which she sustained when a wagon turned over

Jakob Heinrich married Susanna Heese (younger sister of Margaretha) 2 August 1881

Jakob Heinrich died 27 July 1883; Susanna died 18 October 1950 in Windsor, Ontario

When Jakob died, Penner continued managing the mill on his own, but eventually it went bankrupt

Toews, Jakob Johann

(age 48)

Wife **Margaretha Gerhard** (44)

Children: **Margaretha** (22), **Victor** (20)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Toews, Johann Heinrich

(see biography Johann Heinrich Toews p 176)

Born 24 December 1841

Parents Heinrich Toews and Margaretha Loewen

Married **Susanna Neufeld** 23 July 1863. She was born 20 January 1845

Children:

1. **Heinrich** - born 16 April 1865, married Agatha J Lehn 31 August 1896

Agatha was born in 1869, her father was "Odessa" Jacob Lehn

Children:

1. Johann - born 1897, member of the White Army, executed by the Reds
25 August 1920

2. Jacob - born 1898, married Elisabeth Friesen, he died in Canada

3. Nikolai - born 1901, died in Novosibirsk in 1960

4. Eugene - born 1905, died in Canada 1985

Looked after his father's business, and eventually took over his holdings

Heinrich died 9 January 1934, Agatha died in 1965 in Canada

2. **Susanna** - born 15 February 1867, died 10 December 1867

3. **Johann** - born 24 February 1869 (see separate listing Johann Johann Toews)

4. **Margaretha** - born 17 September 1871, baptized 25 May 1892 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony

5. **Jakob** - born 31 December 1873, baptized 22 May 1895 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony, married Margaretha (Greta) Bock

6. **Susanna** - born 8 April 1876, baptized 22 May 1895 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony, married Abram J Dyck 10 June 1900, Susanna died 4 October 1914 in

Zaporozhye

7. Katharina - born 25 July 1878, baptized 2 June 1897 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony, married Peter Heinrich Heese 26 June 1901

(see listing Heinrich Heinrich Heese II)

8. **Wilhelm** - born 25 February 1883, baptized 3 June 1902 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony

Constructed an elaborate three-story house at the corner of Ekaterininsky Prospect and Shirokaya Street

This building included the Toews home on the second floor, as well as apartments for students who came to study in Ekaterinoslav. The home became popular for youth activities. The main floor included some shops

Together with his brother Jakob, Johann owned a large steam-powered flour mill, constructed in 1868

In 1880 Jakob constructed his own mill, so Johann became the sole owner of this mill

Humble Christian, always willing to help whenever the need arose, often benefactor to the poor

Provided funds for Jakob Aron Rempel to attend *Predigerschule* in Switzerland 1906-1912

Rempel subsequently became a well respected teacher and elder

City council member

Apparently after the Pogrom of October 1905 the Jewish financiers were unwilling to lend money to other businesses, so Johann closed down the mill. He sold all the machinery and rented out the empty granaries as living quarters

According to a reference book *Ves Ekaterinoslav* published in 1913, Johann likely had at least 4 house properties; at Krestovaya 2, Pushkinsky 61, Prospekt 124, Shirokaia 1, as well as a mill at Krestovaya 2

Wife Susanna died 7 October 1912 of cancer, announcement on the front page of *Der Botschafter*

Johann Heinrich Toews died in 12 August 1915 in St Petersburg

Toews, Johann Johann

Born 24 February 1869

Parents Johann Heinrich Toews and Susanna Neufeld

Third of 8 children

Owned a soap factory, financed largely by his father

Made high-quality soap, but business was difficult because others made poor quality soap, and undercut his prices

With difficulties in financing, he closed his business in Ekaterinoslav and moved to Taganrog, where he set up another soap factory

He was considered to be the black sheep of the family

Had liaison with one of the female servants of the house, had a number of children with her

Further history not known

Unger, Abraham

One of the four Chortitza Mennonite Brethren leaders who were arrested 12 July 1862 and jailed for 2 weeks in Ekaterinoslav

Born 31 January 1825 in Einlage, Chortitza Colony

Baptized and joined the MB Church 4 March 1862, was minster, then elder
Died 1880

Unger, Franz

Born 15 October 1905 in Franzfeld, Yazykovo Colony

Married **Katharina Buhr** who was born 11 September 1904; her father was a teacher in
Hochfeld, Yazykovo

Children:

Viktor - born 8 September 1929, to Canada in 1948, married Margaretha Kroeker, 4 sons

Louise - born 13 August 1934, concentration camp in Tajikistan, starved to death in 1948

Ella - born 5 February 1943, concentration camp in Tajikistan, called out and to Canada
in 1975, married Heinrich Federau in 1976, lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba (2008)

Franz was a bookkeeper, so the family quite frequently moved from place to place, possibly
accounting for the fact that Franz was not arrested

Lived in Dnepropetrovsk for about 8 months, late 1942 into 1943, at 26 A Karl Marx Street
With the German Army retreat the family was evacuated to the Warthegau region of Poland

Unger, Margaretha

Born in the 1920s, maiden name Hildebrandt

Lived in Dnepropetrovsk 1942-1943, during the time of the German occupation

Her husband Johann Unger had been arrested in 1937 and shot

She worked in a hospital in Dnepropetrovsk, later she married Johann Dyck

She died in Germany about 2005

Unrau, Jakob Jakob

(age 28)

Wife **Katharina Johann** (28)

Children: **Johann Jakob** (3), **Walter** (1)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Unruh, Kornelius Benjamin

Born 1849 in Waldheim, Molotschna

Graduated from Halbstadt *Zentralschule*, where his teacher was Gustav Rempel

Started teaching on an estate, then Blumenort, Molotschna

During summers he studied privately in Ekaterinoslav, Kiev and Odessa, learning Russian,
French and educational methods

1870 accepted position in Halbstadt *Zentralschule*

Interrupted teaching with further education in Switzerland, then the winter of 1872-1873 in
Moscow

Then became principal and teacher at the Ohrloff *Zentralschule* for 32 years

Involved in publishing religious and historical texts

Established a secondary school and Bible school; tremendous capacity for work

Died 17 August 1910

Unruh, Kornelius Kornelius

Born about 1880, in Ohrloff, Molotschna

Parents Kornelius Benjamin Unruh and Maria Epp

Wife **Katharina Heinrich** _____, born about 1883

Daughter **Maria** born about 1905

In 1912 he was a practicing a lawyer living in Ekaterinoslav

He was listed as a contributor to the newspaper *Friedensstimme* (12 December 1912)

Registered in Chortitza by the late 1920s or 1930s

Arrested 5 September 1937, jailed and probably shot

Wife Katharina was *verschlept* (sent into exile) 5 August 1941, just shortly before the German forces reached Chortitza

Kornelius and Katharina were on the list of refugees who were to migrate to Canada,
published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* 13 December 1922

They obviously did not make it to Canada for reasons not known

The fate of their daughter is not known

Vogt, David Andreas

Born 12 October 1890 in Schoenwiese, Chortitza Colony

Dorfschule in Schoenwiese, *Zentralschule* in Chortitza

Teacher in Chortitza Colony and Memrik Colony

During the Civil War visited his oldest sister, Mrs Neta Von Kampen, who was taking care of the household of miller J J Thiessen

Makhno bandits raided the household and took all males to a school building, where they were sentenced to death

David was lined up against a wall when a Jewish boy recognized him as being an acquaintance from Schoenwiese. He vouched for him, and thus saved his life

Vogt, Johann Peter

(age 30)

Wife **Helena Peter** (25)

Children: **Peter Johann** (4), **Nikolai** (2)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* 13 December 1922

Vogt, Katharina

Called Widow Vogt nee Nickel

Had **12 children**

Address: Skorikovs Strasse No 1, Ekaterinoslav

Asked for food drafts through pages of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* 17 May 1922 p 6

Looking for Benjamin, Peter, Kornelius, Heinrich and Abram, sons of Benjamin Nickel, of Saskatchewan, Canada

Von Kampen (nee Vogt), Neta

Likely born in Schoenwiese, Chortitza Colony

Elder sister of David Andreas Vogt

She was taking care of the household of miller J J Thiessen

During the Civil War Makhno bandits raided the household and took all males to a school building, where they were sentenced to death

Her brother David was visiting at the time, so he was taken

She prayed that if his life was spared she would fast every Friday. When his life was spared,

she kept her promise

Voth, Gerhard

Lawyer practicing in Ekaterinoslav

Wiebe, Abram Peter

(age 49)

Children: **Abram** (20), **Helena** (19), **Peter** (16), **Heinrich** (10)

Nephew: **Kornelius Kornelius Grunau** (21)

Niece: **Margaretha Heinrich Wiebe** (16)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Wieler, Gerhard

One of the four Chortitza Mennonite Brethren leaders who were arrested 12 July 1862 and
jailed for 2 weeks in Ekaterinoslav

Born about 1834

Baptized and joined the MB Church in September 1861

Spent considerable time in St Petersburg to negotiate recognition for the Chortitza MB Church

Was jailed in Ekaterinoslav at least twice, the second time for baptizing a Russian

Later migrated to North America

Wieler, Kornelius Abram

(age 40)

Children: **Helena** (15), **Rudolf** (11), **Alissa** (3)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Wieler, Peter Abram

(age 47)

Wife **Katharina Isaak** (46)

Children: **Isaak Peter** (22), **Helena** (18), **Abram** (14), **Peter** (11)

On the list of refugees who migrated to Canada, published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*
13 December 1922

Wiens, Peter Johann

Graduate of the Gnadenfeld *Zentralschule*, pupil of Hermann Lenzmann

Studied mathematics at the University of Kharkov and Dorpat, where he graduated

Probably taught a number of years at the Ekaterinoslav Mennonite school, likely 1881-1886

Taught in the Ohrloff *Zentralschule* for 3 years, then retired because of poor health

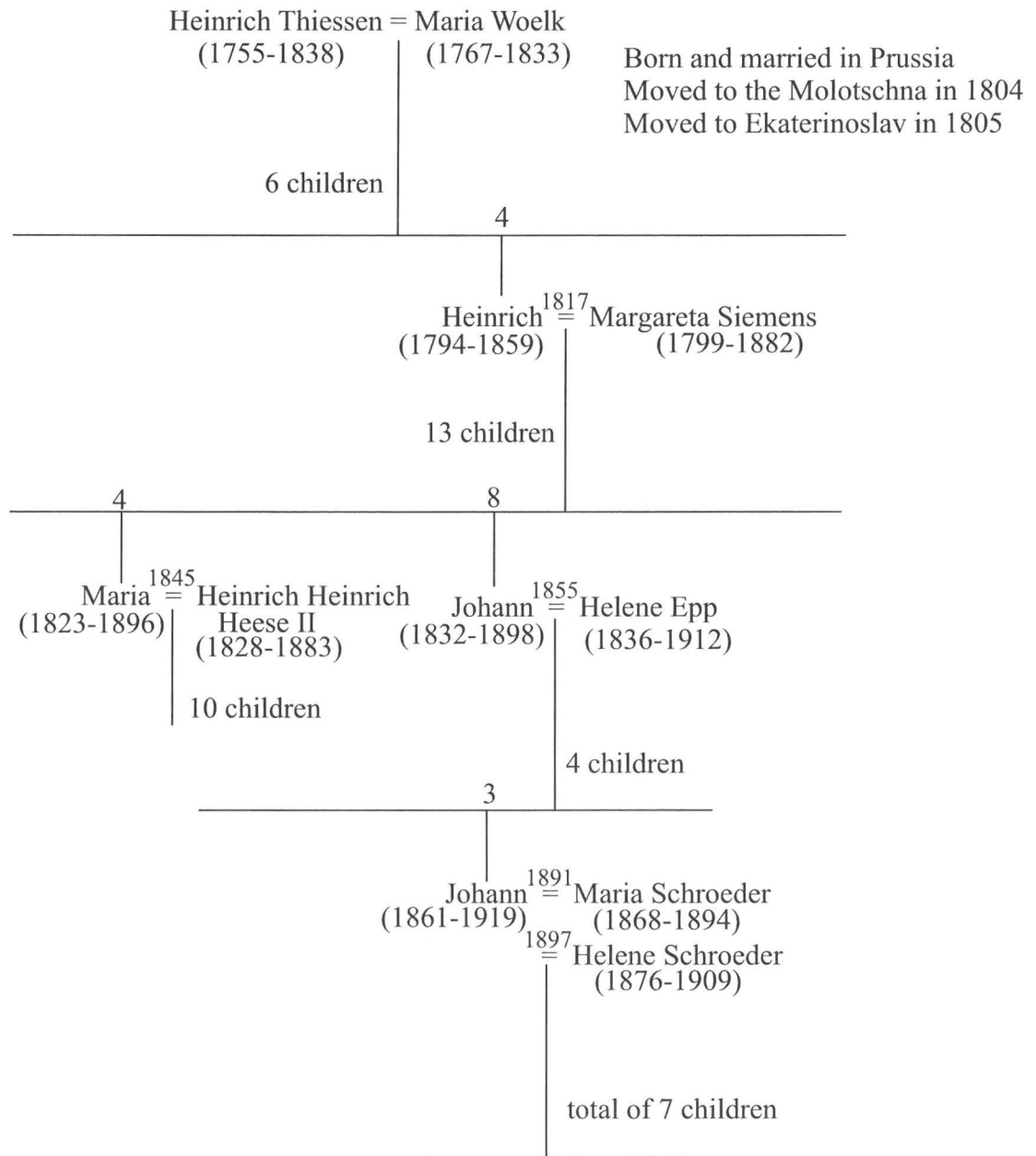
August 1909 became director of the Halbstadt *Mittelschule* and *Kommerzschule*

STUDENTS IN THE VARIOUS SCHOOLS OF EKATERINOSLAV

- Bergmann, Aganetha - Bergmannsthal, *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav (about 1897)
- Bergmann, Helena - Bergmannsthal, *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav (about 1894)
- Esau, Alexander - Ekaterinoslav, Institute of Mining, engineer, worked in Ekaterinoslav
- Esau, Johann - Halbstadt, Molotschna, *Gymnasium* (1869), then engineering studies in Riga, worked in Ekaterinoslav and elsewhere, mayor of Ekaterinoslav
- Esau, Jakob - Halbstadt, Molotschna, *Gymnasium* (1869), then medicine in Kiev, then practiced as ophthalmologist in Ekaterinoslav using a small hospital/clinic
- Franz, Heinrich - Prussia, then Gnadenfeld, 2 year *Kursus der Russischen Sprache* in Ekaterinoslav, likely completing it in 1845, then teacher in the Chortitza *Zentralschule*
- Friesen, Abram Abram - Molotschna, *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav, then University in Odessa, science teacher in Halbstadt
- Hamm, Abram - came to Ekaterinoslav in 1820 to have better educational possibilities, likely studied in *Gymnasium*
- Heese, Heinrich II - came to Ekaterinoslav in 1820 to have better educational possibilities, likely studied in *Gymnasium*
- Heese, Peter Heinrich - from Ekaterinoslav, *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav, Moscow for further education, teacher in Gnadenfeld, Ohrloff, estate owner, philanthropist
- Klassen, Wilhelm - Melitopol, Institute of Mining, engineer, factory owner in Melitopol
- Lepp, Johann Gerhard - Schoenwiese, *Realschule*, then Technical College, thereafter, in 1879, part-ownership and management of Lepp & Wallmann factories
- Niebuhr, Jakob - youngest son of Hermann Niebuhr, Secondary School, likely *Gymnasium*, completed what was likely a four- year study in 1879, then back to family business
- Penner, Wilhelm Wilhelm - Chortitza, *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav (1870-1874), teacher of Russian in Chortitza *Zentralschule* (1874-1881), then into business
- Riediger, Peter Martin - Chortitza *Zentralschule*, *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav, further studies in Prussia, teacher in Chortitza *Zentralschule* in Religion and German 1879-1892
- Schellenberg, Bernhard Paul - passed the *Feldsheer* (assistant medical officer) examinations in Ekaterinoslav, he was the first doctor in the Chortitza Colony
- Unruh, Kornelius Benjamin - teacher, summers studying Russian language and pedagogy with Russian teachers in Ekaterinoslav, Kiev, Odessa, then teacher in Ohrloff *Zentralschule*

THE THIESSEN FAMILY OF EKATERINOSLAV

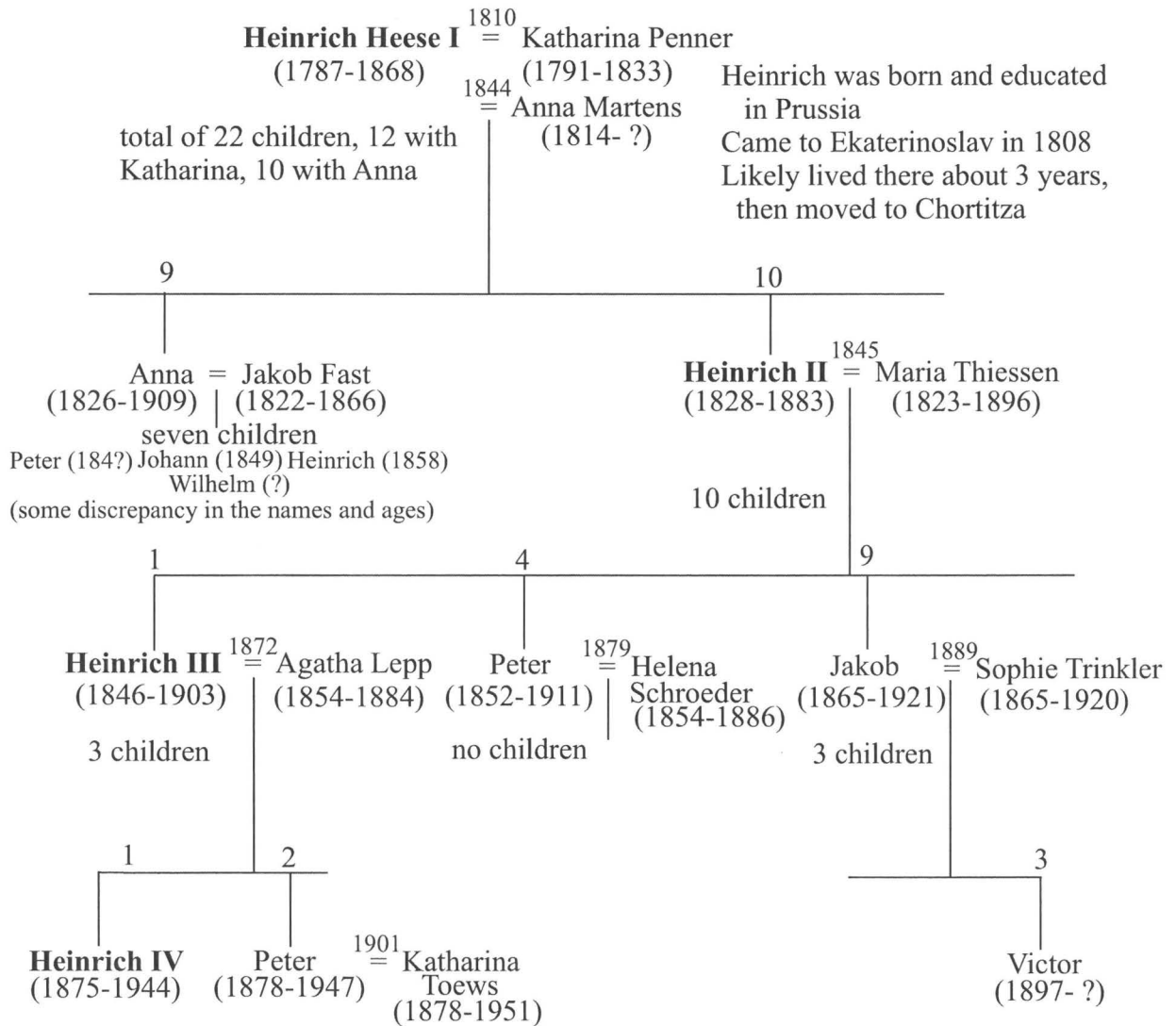
Following mainly those who actually lived in Ekaterinoslav



When Heinrich Thiessen came to Ekaterinoslav in 1805 he established a vinegar distillery and a treadmill. Quite possibly around 1825 the milling business expanded to a much larger mill. For some time grandson Johann Heinrich Thiessen seems to have been the driving force in the mill, probably taken over by his son Johann Johann Thiessen when his father died in 1898. The Thiessen mill is mentioned as being the longest-functioning business in Ekaterinoslav.

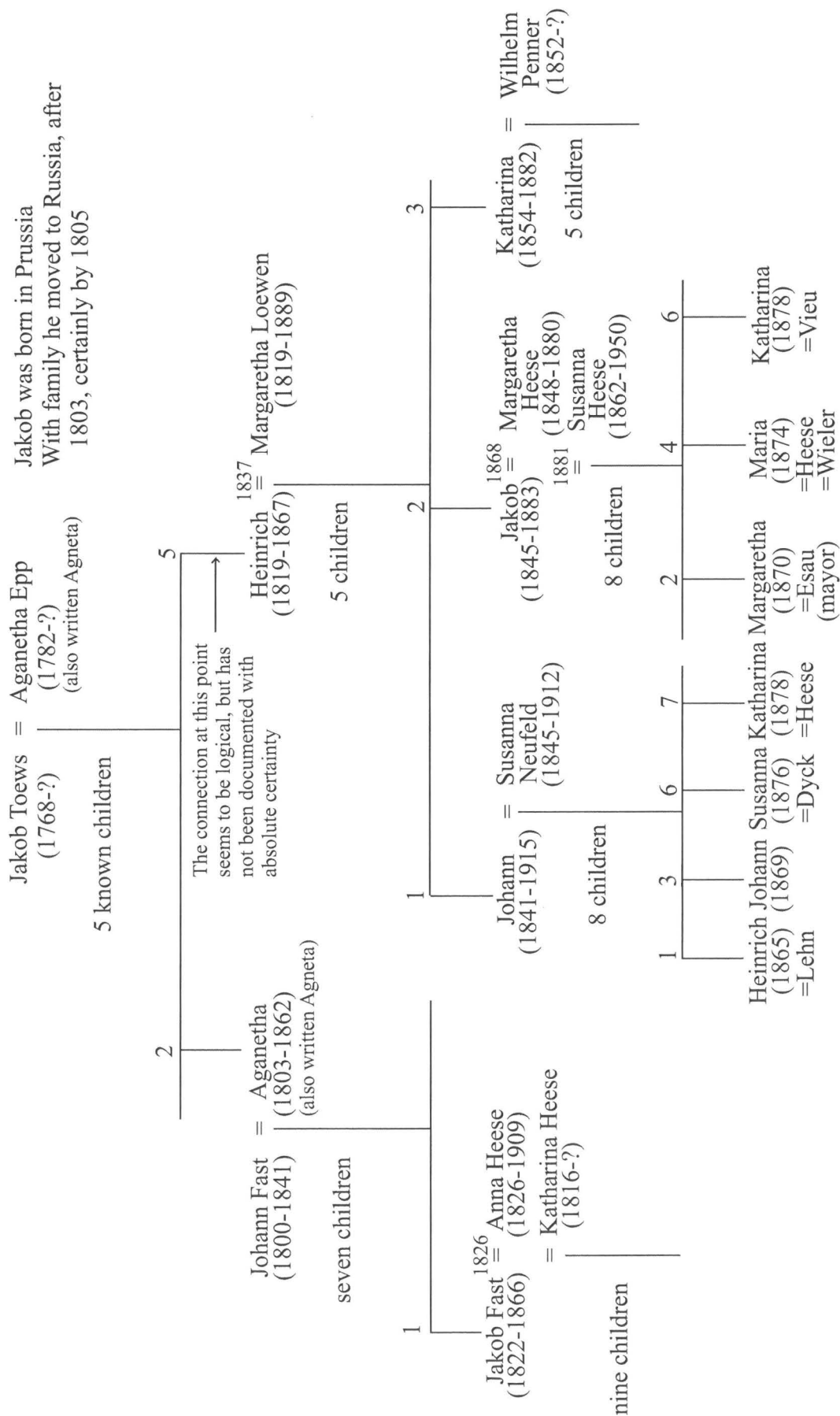
THE HEESE FAMILY OF EKATERINOSLAV

Following mainly those who actually lived in Ekaterinoslav



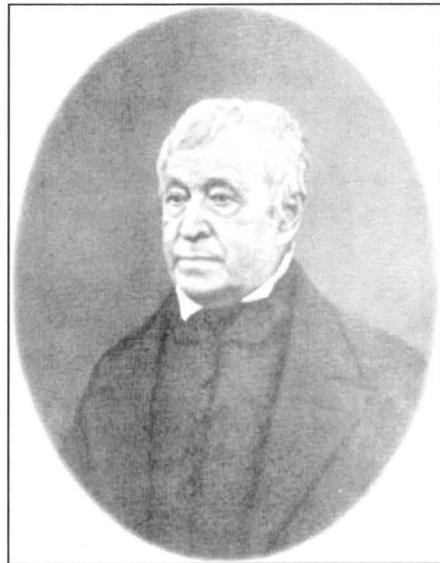
THE TOEWS FAMILY OF EKATERINOSLAV

Following mainly those who actually lived in Ekaterinoslav





Hermann Abram Bergmann and
wife Helena (nee Heinrichs)



Heinrich Heese I



Bernhard Paul Schellenberg; he
passed the *Feldscheer* exam in
Ekaterinoslav

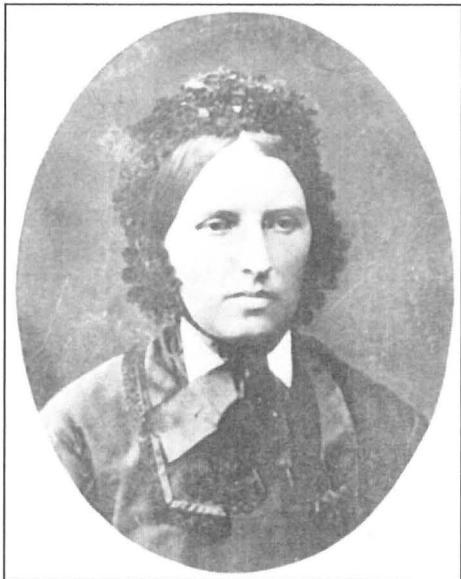


Wilhelm Wilhelm Penner

Thiessen Family



Mill owner Johann J Thiessen, with sons Konstantin
Johann and Nikolai



Helene Thiessen (nee Epp), wife of
Johann Thiessen (1836-1912)



Margaretha Schroeder (nee Thiessen),
wife of Johann Schroeder (1856-1934)

Jakob Heinrich Toews Family



The Jakob Heinrich Toews family about 1910, Margaretha and Johann Esau are seated at the table. Both parents had died in the 1880s

The couple behind the Esaus is Charles and Katharina Vieu, the ones on the left likely Wilhelm and Maria Heese, on the right Jakob and Aganetha Toews



Charles and Katharina (nee Toews) Vieu

Johann Heinrich Toews Family



Heinrich Johann Toews family, front row l to r:
Johann, Eugene, Nikolai, Jakob, behind them
the parents Agatha and Heinrich



Susanna and sister Margaretha,
daughters of Johann Heinrich
Toews

Johann Heinrich Toews Family



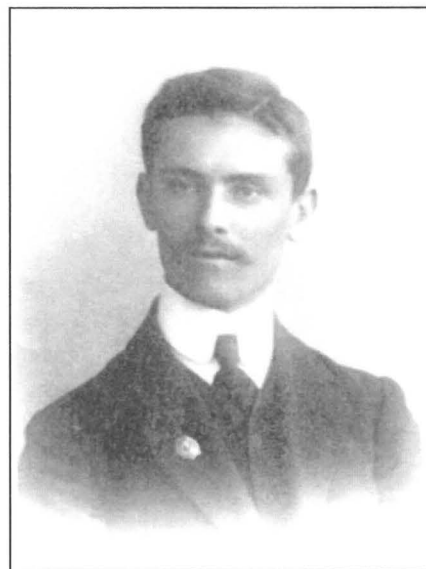
Jakob Johann Toews



Margaretha Toews (nee Bock),
wife of Jakob Johann Toews



Abram Dyck and Susanna Toews on the day of
their engagement in 1900



Wilhelm Johann Toews



Architect Dietrich Thiessen, with children
Konstantin, Paul, and Elsa about 1916
(additional pictures of this family in the biography
of Dietrich Kornelius Thiessen)



Ella Federau (nee Unger) in front of her
former home at 26 A Karl Marx Street

MENNONITE INSTITUTIONS

Der Botschafter

This Mennonite periodical was published twice a week

It was initiated in an attempt to bond together Mennonites who were scattered throughout Russia, starting during a period of unrest and revolution in the country

Chief editor was David Heinrich Epp, who was also minister of the Mennonite Church and teacher in the elementary school

It usually had 6 pages, sometimes 8, with 2-4 pages of advertising

It presented religious and devotional material, but also discussed events of the day in the fields of politics, education and science

The first issue appeared 13 August 1905, printed in Ekaterinoslav by Publisher Johann Thiessen

Initial subscription cost 3R for half a year, 30K for a month

Frequent strikes in Ekaterinoslav, as well as other difficulties, made it necessary to transfer printing to Berdyansk in 1907, where H A Ediger was the publisher

In 1911 cost 5R per year, 3R for half a year, and 50K for a month

Together with all other German journals, it ceased publication in 1914 at the beginning of World War I, despite carrying very patriotic articles and reports, even after the onset of hostilities

The last issue allowed to be published seems to have been that of 28 October 1914



Mennonite Church

At first church services were held in private homes on alternate Sundays

In the first few decades the church centered around the Heinrich Thiessen family

For official services such as baptism, communion, they called on the elder of Kronsgarten

The church functioned as an affiliate of the Chortitza Mennonite Church until 1898

The first school teacher Jakob Abram Klassen also led the church services and read the sermons

The first minister was Abram Klassen, who later was teacher at a school for girls

In 1886 David Heinrich Epp of Rosental was chosen as minister by the Chortitza Mennonite

congregation.

In 1889 he was asked to be the minister of the Ekaterinoslav Mennonite Church, at the same time also being a teacher in the Mennonite elementary school. Once there he also gave religious instruction in the local business college.

In 1912 Epp moved to Berdyansk

Epp was followed by Johann Johann Klassen, who had been teacher of Religion at the Chortitza *Zentralschule*

The church intended to meet the needs of the large number of Mennonites who came to study in the Russian secondary schools, organizing various activities to help in this regard

They had choral groups, lectures, amateur presentations, a large library of German books to keep the young people together; there were 30-50 young people in the city at any one time

They had Sunday services and religious instruction for all age groups

At the turn of the century the membership was described as consisting of business people, some house owners, 3 lawyers, 2 doctors, pensioners, 1 architect, 1 watchmaker, officials from various businesses including banks. "No one belonged to the working class."

Preliminary work for the Chortitza *Maedchenschule* and the Bethania Mental Hospital was done here

After meeting in homes the church rented a facility for both school and church

In 1910 a new school was built; church services were held in the school

The planned new church was not built because of the outbreak of war in 1914

Church services could be held only on Sunday, gatherings of other kinds, such as choir practices, celebrations, literary programs or church council meetings were prohibited by government decree

In 1917 a meeting was held in an empty warehouse on the yard of Johann Thiessen. Various questions were discussed relating to the problems of the church and Mennonites in general. The meeting was chaired by Heinrich Andres

In 1918 for a short period the minister was Jakob Rempel, who was later ordained as an elder

Many of the leading men were very active in church work, particularly among the youth:

Johann Thiessen, often a benefactor to the poor

Heinrich Heese, as a bank director, helped many people

Jakob Heese, attorney, active in the youth work and a choral director

Heinrich Toews, in whose large beautiful home all youth activities were held

Mennonite Elementary School

First Mennonite German elementary school opened in 1851, for their own children

Heinrich David Epp (father of David Heinrich Epp) taught in the school for a number of years, likely in the mid 1850s

Teacher 1873-1881 Jakob Abraham Klassen; his was considered to be a model school

Many students could transfer directly from his school to the fifth class of the *Gymnasium*

Peter Johann Wiens, graduate of the University of Kharkov and Dorpat, taught a few years, possibly 1881-1886

Peter Martens was a teacher for a brief time, likely around 1886-1889

Teacher and minister David Heinrich Epp was appointed in 1889, and continued until 1912

He was an outstanding teacher , educator and minister, but was not fluent in Russian
Appointed teacher Pr Avk Osipenko, and he continued in that position until 1919, when the school closed for good

Developed into a larger school with 3 teachers

Also served Russian students and foreigners, as a preparatory school for Russian secondary schools. Lutherans and Jews also attended the school

New school/church built on Fabrikschanya Street in 1910 with an apartment for a teacher or minister

Subjects taught German, Russian, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and Bible stories

Church services were also held in the school

After David Epp left Johann Klassen of Krons Garten taught; he was a good theologian

He had been a teacher of Religion at the Chortitza *Zentralschule*

The last teacher was Cornelius Sawatsky, remaining until the school closed in 1919



Elementary school with teacher David H Epp,
and likely a lady teacher

Ophthalmology (Eye) Clinic and Hospital

Born in Halbstadt, Molotschna, Jakob Esau attended *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav

Jakob studied medicine in Kiev

Practiced as physician in the Chortitza villages

Esau presumably then trained in ophthalmology

By 1894 he had established a private eye clinic and a small hospital in Ekaterinoslav

This seems to have functioned at least until 1919

Emigration from Russia to Canada in the 1920s

It needs to be recognized that not all refugee lists are complete

In some lists the names of the refugees are given, their destination, but not their place of

origin

One major list of Ekaterinoslav refugees was of those planning to leave Russia. At least one family on that list did not make it to Canada for unknown reasons

Thirty-four family units, comprising 149 individuals either did emigrate, or seemed to be on the way to Canada. Family groups varied from one individual to a total of 9. One person made it to Constantinople in 1921; 32 families were listed as migrating to Canada by 13 December 1922; one gentleman emigrated in 1924

The emigration from Ekaterinoslav occurred surprisingly early in the 1920s, most leaving Russia in 1922. Migration from the nearby Chortitza Colony was much later

No refugees from Ekaterinoslav could be found on the lists for the 1929-1930 escape via Moscow, and no person was definitely identified as crossing the Amur River ice to Harbin. No refugees from Ekaterinoslav were found on the lists compiled of those escaping after World War II

The Famine

Six requests for food drafts by people from Ekaterinoslav were published in the pages of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* in 1922, each likely expressing the needs of an entire family. One widow asked for help for her 12 children

OTHER PEOPLE IN EKATERINOSLAV OF IMPORTANCE TO MENNONITES

Samuel Christian Kontenius (The memorial spelled his name "Contentius")

Born in Silesia in 1749

Came to Russia at the age of 25, and in 1785 entered the Russian state service

In 1797 a Board of State Economy, Guardianship of Foreigners and Rural Husbandry was established to promote agriculture and industry in the colonies, as well as to administer them

Kontenius was appointed to investigate the condition of all foreign colonists in New Russia.

He uncovered much confusion as well as corruption at all levels of the Russian administration. The Mennonites he described as almost all having a well organized way of life, clean and industrious

On 26 July 1800 the Board established an Office of Guardianship of New Russian Foreign Settlers, with the main office in the city of Ekaterinoslav, with Kontenius appointed the Chief Judge

The new administration was well organized, and proved to be reasonably competent by Russian standards

From 1803 to 1805 Kontenius was occupied with the settling of many foreigners in South Russia, a total of 120 villages in the regions of Odessa, the Crimea and along the Molochna River. Settlers were German, Bulgarian, Greek, Swedish and French

Kontenius initiated some new agricultural programs in the colonies, including Chortitza and the Molotschna. He was interested in sheep-breeding, fruit and silk culture as well as the wine industry. He laid the foundation for the future prosperity of the colonies by giving his attention to all branches of the business. His own experimental garden in Ekaterinoslav was planted with trees and other plants which he considered would benefit the colonists

He was well liked by the colonists, including Johann Cornies. The Molotschna named a new village after him, "Konteniusfeld," which was founded in 1821

In 1818 poor health forced Kontenius to resign his position

Czar Alexander I was so impressed by the agricultural progress of the colonies that he personally asked him to continue to aid the settlers as his health would allow

The founding of the Agricultural Association in the Molotschna in 1830 was largely attributed to his initiative

Samuel Kontenius, by then a Senator, died 30 May 1830 in Ekaterinoslav. He was buried in the cemetery of the small Lutheran village Josephstal near Ekaterinoslav. The colonists placed a memorial stone at the grave site. His small capital he left for the building of schools and churches



Tombstone erected in honor of Samuel Contentius in the cemetery at Josephstal

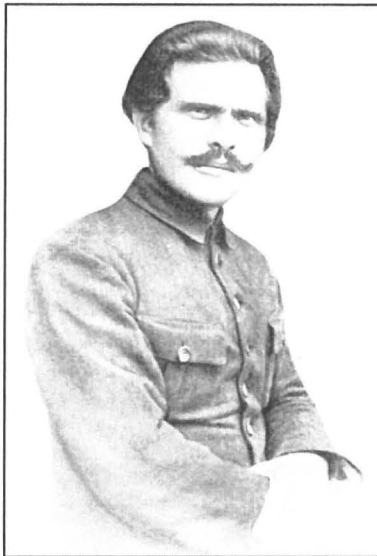
Nestor Ivanovich Makhno

Born 27 October 1889 in Gulyaipole, a Ukrainian town about 65 km northeast of the Molotschna Colony

Despite coming from a poor peasant family he completed his public school, then as a youth worked as a shepherd, drove ox carts for German landowners, worked in a foundry, and for a time in a small Kroeger plant

In 1906 he joined a group of Ukrainian anarchists, and committed various terrorist acts, such as attacking the police

He was arrested in 1908, and in March 1910 sentenced to death by hanging in the Ekaterinoslav regional court



Nestor Makhno in 1921

The sentence was commuted to life in prison, so he was transferred to the Butyrka Prison in Moscow

He was released with the general amnesty for political prisoners in March 1917, and returned home to Gulyaipole

When German troops occupied the region in early 1918 he temporarily left for Moscow, then returned in July to organize small bands of anarchists which employed hit-and-run tactics largely against local estates

When German troops withdrew in November 1918 there was total anarchy in the region, and Makhno's ragtag army had virtually free reign. The "Revolutionary Insurrection Army of Ukraine" seemed to prefer terrorizing Mennonite colonies in the area, likely because they were relatively wealthy and largely nonresistant

In 1919 Ekaterinoslav was occupied by Makhno for a time, using the Astoria Hotel as his home base

The principal time of uncontrolled terror among the Mennonites was October to December 1919, with 199 murders in the Sagradovka Colony, 132 in Yazykovo, 97 in Chortitza and 37 in the Molotschna

With the Red Army gaining control of the area, the partisans were no longer needed, so Makhno felt it wise to escape to Romania, then to Danzig, Berlin and finally Paris. Makhno died in Paris on 25 July 1934, likely from excessive drink and tuberculosis

Grigori Aleksandovich Potemkin

Born 13 September 1739 in the village of Chizhovo, near Smolensk

He was a descendant of the Moscovite diplomat Pytor Potemkin, but his immediate family was that of a minor army officer

Potemkin studied at the University of Moscow, then enlisted in the Chevalier Guard

He participated in the palace coup that ousted Czar Peter III and enthroned Catherine II

He was promoted to second lieutenant of the guards

Potemkin emerged as a war hero in the ongoing struggle with the Turks, for example, with his cavalry, defeating them in a number of battles in 1769. His commanding general commented "I am immediately recommending the courage and skill shown in

battle by Major-General Potemkin” This bravery came to the attention of Czarina Catherine

Catherine needed reliable assistants and valued Potemkin’s organizational skills and energy In 1774 Catherine and Grigori became lovers, and even though both had subsequent affairs, they seem to have functioned virtually as husband and wife until Potemkin’s death



Prince Grigori Potemkin

While Potemkin loved power, luxury and personal wealth, he was to some degree guided by a spirit of enlightenment

With Russia’s acquisition of huge tracts of land near the Black Sea, Potemkin was appointed as the virtual ruler of these territories. He supported a stream of Russian and foreign immigrants (including Mennonites) and founded a number of cities (Kherson, Nikolaev, Sevastopol, Ekaterinoslav). He founded the Black Sea Fleet, and in 1783 annexed the Crimea for Russia. This victory earned him the title of “His Serene Highness”

In 1787 the Czarina was travelling to the Crimea. To impress her with the progress being made in the newly conquered territories, Potemkin had false-fronted villages made, which would look like the real thing from the river barge on which the Catherine was riding. To this day self-serving deception is called “Potemkin village”

The Mennonite delegates sent to “spy out the land” in 1787 dealt with Potemkin and his officials. They chose land near Berislav, near the Black Sea. When the settlers actually arrived, they were informed that because of the threat by the Turks, this land was unsafe. They were given the much less suitable land around the Chortitza River. It so happened that this land was owned by Potemkin

In 1791 the Czarina sent Potemkin southwards to Jassy to conduct peace negotiations as the chief Russian plenipotentiary. He died on the way there, on the open steppe, on 5 October 1791. Catherine II had him buried at the Catherine Cathedral in Kherson, one of the cities he had founded

MENNONITE BUSINESSES

Dnvis Sewing Machine Agency

Wilhelm Johann Heese for a time was the manager, then he, together with a relative, took over the agency of a sewing machine company "Dnvis"
Probably in Ekaterinoslav, likely in the 1890s

Esau Ophthalmology (Eye) Clinic and Hospital

Established in 1894 by Jakob Jakob Esau
Esau was one of the recipients of the "Alexander Stipends" studying in a *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav
He graduated from medicine in Kiev
In 1894 he established an Eye Clinic and Hospital in Ekaterinoslav

Esau Brick Factory

About 1903 Johann Esau and partners established a brick and building block factory using the white sand on the south side of the Dniepr River
Johann appointed his younger brother, Kornelius, to be the manager
About 1914 the business was sold to the engineering works, Mantel of Riga

Fast

(There are a number of different versions of this story)
The first Fast mill was a treadmill established in 1844, by Jakob Fast
He died in 1866, so the mill was managed by his wife Anna (nee Heese) and his son Heinrich
First steam-powered mill built in 1866
Under the management of son Heinrich Fast the mill prospered
On 15 October 1890 the mill burned down and a new one was built in 1891 with a capacity of 5,000 pud flour per day
In 1894-1897 rebuilt the mill, the Luther-Braunschweig milling company actually doing the work. This increased the capacity to 7,000 pud flour per day
Building is seven stories high
During the rebuilding son Heinrich died, and a younger son Wilhelm took over the management
In 1902 the mill employed 23 people; the business was evaluated at 200,000R
While Wilhelm was well educated in technical and financial management, he did not manage the mill well. He made many mistakes
By 1911 the mill had been taken over by the banks
Mill was nationalized after the Revolution
In 1926 had major renovations to increase capacity; became one of the largest flour mill collectives in the Soviet Union

The building is still in good condition and still functions as a mill (2007)
There is a small museum outlining the history of the mill

Fast Brick Factory

Owned by Sophie Alexander Fast
In 1902 employed 53 people and was evaluated at 20,000R
Somehow related to the J J Fast business

Fast Lumber Business

Johann Jakob Fast started a sawmill, likely about 1875
With careful planning a successful business
Delivered much lumber for the Fast flour mill, on a long term credit basis
When the flour mill failed Johann's financial status weakened, and creditors took over
the lumber business, probably about 1900

Fast Iron Foundry

Johann Jakob Fast and his son-in-law Peter Gerhard Lepp built an iron foundry probably about
1900
Lepp died, and it was hard to get another good manager
With the financial difficulties the foundry was scaled down to a workshop

Hamm Mill

Abraham Abraham Hamm married Maria Voth, daughter of Franz Voth and Maria Heese
Maria Heese was the daughter of Heinrich Heinrich Heese I
At some point moved to Ekaterinoslav, building a steam-powered mill, likely in the 1870s
or 1880s
After a few years liquidated it and moved back to his home community, which might have been
Einlage

Heese Brothers Mill

Brothers Heinrich and Peter Heese owned this mill
Originally Heinrich had been a partner of Johann Thiessen (1832-1898)
The first mill was built in 1879, using steam and milling equipment bought from the Borsig
Machine Factory in Berlin
This steam-powered milling complex was built on the corner of Ekaterininsky Prospekt
and Fabrichnaya Street
A large five-story building was constructed in 1892
The building had brick walls, metal roofs and large windows
The Heese residence was located on the property
In 1902 listed as owned by Heinrich Heese
In 1902 the mill employed 60 people and was evaluated at 965,000R
According to the *Forstei* Taxation List of 1908 the mill was valued at 100,000R
The mill was nationalized after the Revolution, and no longer exists

Heese, Johann Wilhelm Flour Mill

Johann Wilhelm Heese built a large modern mill on the left bank of the Dniepr, probably in the early 1900s

This venture did not succeed

Then built another mill on the "Blisnetay" Station (part of Ekaterinoslav?)

He died 19 February 1920 of typhus

Lawyers in Ekaterinoslav

Funk, Peter - Neuenburg, Chortitza, University of Moscow, law, practiced in Ekaterinoslav appointed as judge

Heese, Jakob - from Ekaterinoslav, University of Kharkov, law, practiced in Ekaterinoslav
Voth, Gerhard

Unruh, Kornelius - practiced in Ekaterinoslav, certainly in 1912

Metalworks Esau & Co, Ekaterinoslav

Johann Esau moved to Ekaterinoslav in 1889, purchased a plot of land west of the city near Brianskij Zawod, and built a metalworking factory

The company produced transmissions, ploughs and special equipment

Johann Esau was short of cash, so he borrowed money from his brother Jakob and his wife's uncle, Heinrich Heese II

The factory was busy with many orders, but cash flow remained a problem, so that his silent partners were sometimes dissatisfied

One day, probably 1894, Johann was approached by Engineer Goriaynov of the Briansk Steel Works, who offered to buy out the others

The factory was expanded with the addition of a blast furnace using the Bernadoth System
Several months later, in 1895, a Belgian steel company purchased the steel works, paying Johann double the amount of his investment

In 1897 the company employed 97 workers; yearly production was worth 85,000R

Johann continued to work for the firm for another 4 years, likely until 1899

By 1901 there were 1,228 employees

The company was nationalized in 1921, and rebuilt in 1935

Neumann, Eduard

Owned a business in Ekaterinoslav in 1902, evaluated at 45,000R

It employed 15 people

Thiessen Flour Mill

Heinrich Thiessen (1735-1838) settled in Ekaterinoslav on the Prospekt in 1805

He was a miller by inclination and profession

He immediately built a treadmill (powered by horses or oxen). It produced 8 sacks of flour per day

Son Heinrich Thiessen (1794-1859) inherited the treadmill from his father, adding a second mill for grinding grain and a third for making pearl barley

In 1856 his son, Johann Heinrich Thiessen (1832-1898) took over the business

In 1861 he began construction of a steam mill by adding a second story to one of the treadmills. The steam engine, boilers and milling machines were ordered from England, the mill stones from France. The layout of the structure was supervised by 2 English engineers, Gram and Greves. On 1 March 1863 the mill began operation, with a capacity of producing 160 sacks of flour per day. The second old treadmill was transformed into a granary, and a machine house and boiler room replaced the barley mill

At this point brother-in-law Heinrich Heese II joined as a business partner

In 1879 Johann Thiessen (1861-1919) completed his secondary education and joined his father's business. Partner Heinrich Heese was offered the option of leaving the firm, and erecting his own mill. This he chose to do

Autumn of 1879 Johann Thiessen (1832-1898) and Heinrich Heese II travelled to Berlin together, where Heese ordered machinery for his own mill. It was in operation in 1880. The Thiessen mill was enlarged and remodeled in 1880

In 1884 Thiessen was the first to install a steam engine on rollers

In 1894 Johann's son Johann (1861-1919) headed the business. They installed the first automatic mill with a flat sieve. Capacity was 800 sacks of flour in 24 hours. It was considered to be the most modern and largest flour mill in Russia before 1914

When Johann Thiessen (1832-1898) died, a number of heirs became owners, but in 1903 his son became the sole owner

A three-story house served as living quarters for single workers

In 1900 the mill won a gold medal at the Paris exposition

In 1902 the mill employed 50 people; the business was evaluated at 720,000R

It also had a training school for prospective millers

In 1903 the mill won a gold medal at an exhibition held in Moldova

According to the *Forstei* Taxation List of 1908 the mill and the vinegar distillery were valued at 140,000R

In 1910 the mill received a gold medal (one report says silver medallion) at the South Russian exposition in Ekaterinoslav

The exhibition grounds were almost across the street from the mill

The Thiessen business flourished and operated for over 110 years, becoming the oldest enterprise in the city of Ekaterinoslav as well as in the whole province

The mill was nationalized after the Revolution, upgraded in 1926, and continued production until World War II

After 1945 it was converted into a secondary school; now it is a dormitory for students of a nearby technical school

Thiessen and Heese Shipbuilders

Thiessen and Heese (not sure which ones), together with 2 Jews and one Russian miller built 5 steamships with total carrying capacity of 100,000 pud

They were called "Thiessen," "Peter II," "Josephine," "Augustina," and "Makomehl"

Trial run of the "Thiessen" was from Ekaterinoslav to Kamenokiye, with the whole Mennonite Church on board

Thiessen Vinegar Distillery

Established by Heinrich Thiessen in 1805

The distillery produced corn vinegar; exactly how it was constituted was a family secret
Apparently profit from the distillery could only be used for charitable purposes

Toews, Heinrich Windmill

Jakob Heinrich Toews owned a Dutch style windmill in Ekaterinoslav in 1807

He probably had it before then, since it was destroyed by fire, likely arson, in 1807

Not known if it was rebuilt

Toews, Heinrich Jakob Windmill

Heinrich Jakob Toews owned a windmill in Ekaterinoslav between 1836-1837

He moved to Einlage in 1840 where he continued in the milling business

Presumably sold the mill in Ekaterinoslav

Toews, Heinrich Jakob Mill

Toews returned from Einlage and bought Johann Fast's property in 1857, and built a treadmill

In the spring of 1867 he built a steam-powered mill

Toews died that same year, 1867

On 17 April 1868 the mill was operated by the Toews Brothers firm

These were Johann (1841-1915) and Jakob (1845-1883)

In 1880-1881 Jakob constructed his own mill, leaving Johann as the sole owner of this mill

In 1902 employed 13 people; the business was evaluated at 115,000R

Toews, Jakob Heinrich Mill

Jakob Heinrich Toews, together with his brother-in-law Wilhelm Wilhelm Penner (former teacher in Chortitza *Zentralschule*) built a flour mill, in 1880-1881

Jakob Toews died soon after, in 1883, but Penner carried on the business

Eventually the mill went bankrupt

Toews, Johann Heinrich Mill

Johann Heinrich Toews, together with his brother Jakob Heinrich Toews build a large steam-powered flour mill in 1868

When Jakob built his own mill (together with his brother-in-law) in 1880, Johann became the sole owner

Son Heinrich Johann Toews, likely in the late 1890s looked after his father's business, and eventually took over his holdings

Apparently after the Pogrom of October 1905 the Jewish financiers were unwilling to lend money to other businesses, so Johann closed down the mill. He sold all the machinery, and rented out the empty granaries as living quarters.

The mill must still have been functioning in 1908. According to the *Forstei* Taxation List of 1908 the mill was valued at 50,224R

Toews, Johann Johann Soap Factory

Built a soap factory with the very strong financial backing of his father Johann Heinrich Toews

Produced a very good quality of soap

In 1902 employed 40 people

In 1902 the business was evaluated at 140,000R

Competitors produced a very poor quality soap and drove down the prices

Factory became unprofitable, so Johann sold the business and moved to Taganrog

There he renewed his business and did well

Yuschnaya Zarya (Southern Dawn) (name of newspaper)

After the disturbances of 1905-1906 it was felt that a Russian language newspaper was needed to express the will of the people

Probably involved with the Cadet political party

Among those who thought it was necessary were Peter Heinrich Heese and a number of lawyers and doctors

A printing press was bought from an old outdated Jewish newspaper

Began publishing, likely in 1906

Peter Heinrich Heese was the official publisher, and the principal financial backer

The government levied repeated penalties, some quite substantial

One stipulation Peter Heese did insist on was that no work was to be done on Sundays. This meant that his paper would not appear on Mondays, whereas all the others did

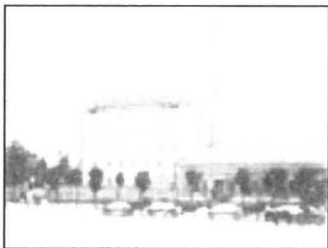
Circulation was "moderate"

Discontinued during World War I

Thiessen Mill



Celebrating the 75th anniversary of the J H Thiessen milling company
of Ekaterinoslav in 1900



J H Thiessen mill in 1900

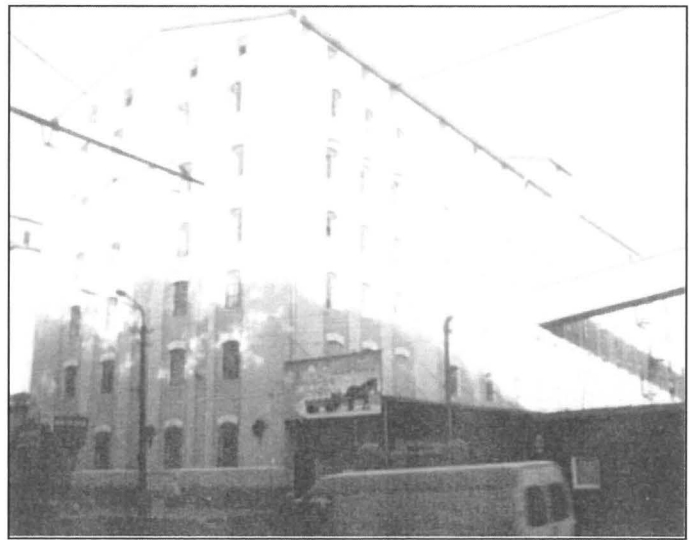


H Thiessen Mill in 1995

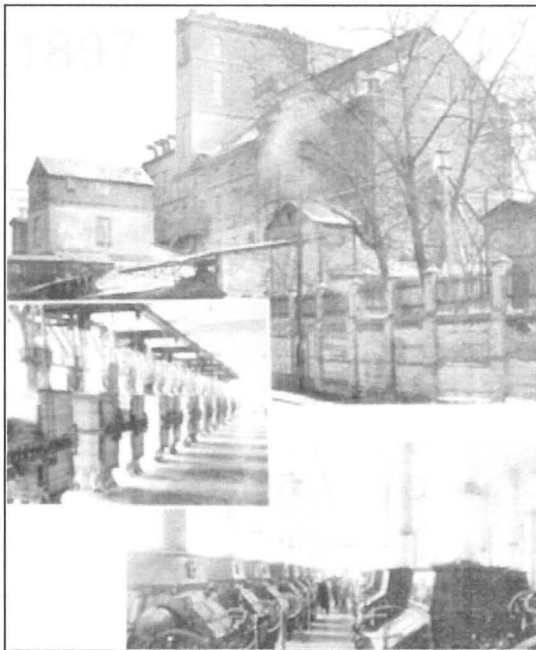
Fast Mill



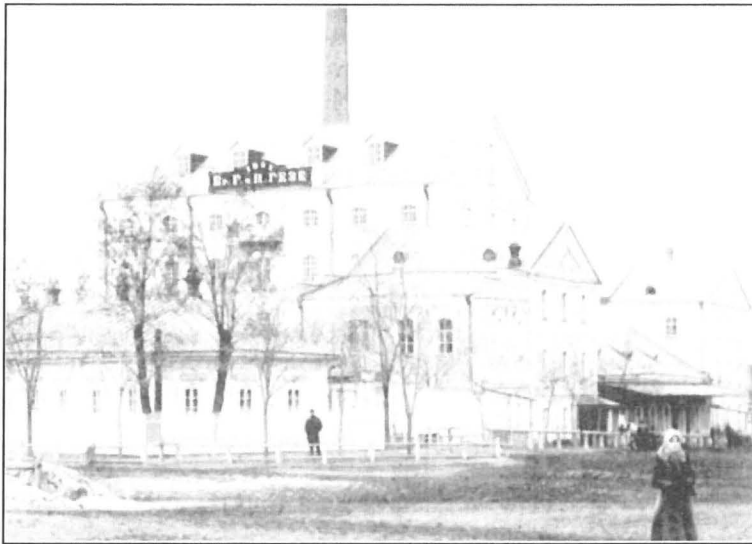
Johann Fast Mill in 2004 -still apparently functioning



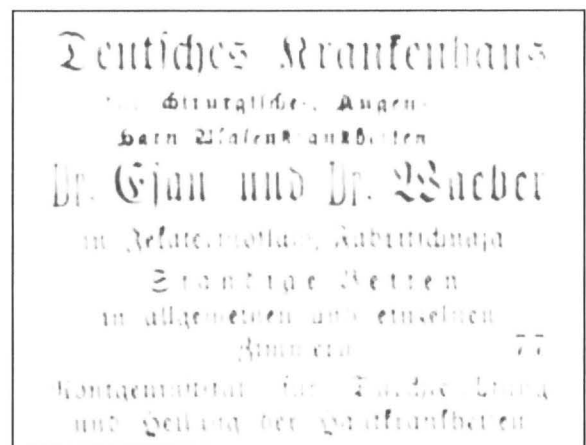
The Johann Fast Mill in 2002



Johann Fast mill historical display



The Heese Brothers Mill in 1892



Advertising for the Esau hospital front page of *Der Botschafter* on 5 October 1912



Mennonite mill in Dnepropetrovsk in 2004

INSTITUTIONS IN WHICH MENNONITES WERE INVOLVED

Alexander Stipend

In honour of Crown Prince Alexander III a stipend was established in 1869 by the Mennonite Colonies, with the help of the *Fuersorgekomitee*

A stipend offered to Mennonite students to attend *Gymnasia* at some Russian locale outside of the Mennonite colonies

There were to be 2 students from the Molotschna Colony, one from the Chortitza Colony

This was intended to help professionalize the training of Mennonite students

Through the influence of their father, Jakob Esau, who was *Schulze* of Halbstadt at the time, Jakob and Johann Esau took advantage of this stipend, attended *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav beginning in 1869

Jakob Esau eventually studied medicine in Kiev, became an ophthalmologist, and opened an eye clinic and hospital in Ekaterinoslav

Johann studied further as an engineer in Riga, worked as an engineer at several locations, eventually became the mayor of Ekaterinoslav

Wilhelm Wilhelm Penner was the Chortitza recipient of the stipend attending a *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav 1870-1874. He later taught in the Chortitza *Zentralschule*, then moved to Ekaterinoslav to go into business

Regional Court and Jail

In 1862 the Mennonite administration of the Chortitza Colony tried to discourage or prevent the establishment of the Mennonite Brethren Church in the colony by arresting 4 of the leaders

According to the diary of Abraham Unger, one of the founders of the MB Church in Chortitza: On 12 July 1862 Abraham Unger, Heinrich Neufeld, Gerhard Wieler and Peter Berg, on the command of Judge Schmigaila of Nikolpol, were arrested and under armed guard taken to Ekaterinoslav. Since they refused to pay a bribe they were taken to the police station, where their names were entered, they were asked a few questions, then sent to the prison.

The iron gate was opened to let them in, then the soldiers locked it behind them, and they were taken to the warden

He was somewhat sympathetic and did not want them to be put into the general prison, but had them put up in the prison school

They had various experiences in the prison

On 23 July, again under guard of armed soldiers, they were taken to the Court, but then returned to the jail

Finally, after having been in prison about 2 weeks, they were released (about 26 July)

Fuorsorge Komitee fuer die Kolonisten der suedlichen Gebiete Russlands

(Called *Fuorsorgekomitee* or Guardian's Committee)

(Also called *Comptoir der Auslaendischen Ansiedler im Suedlichen Russland*)

Established by the Russian government to supervise foreign settlements in Russia, and be responsible for their progress and administration.

From 1763 to 1782 it was in Saratov, near to a German settlement on the Volga River
Then possibly in Kherson for a time

From 26 July 1800 the offices were in Ekaterinoslav until about 1820

From 1799 Samuel Kontenius was the government official in charge of foreign settlers.

He was well liked, and played an important part in the agricultural development of the Molotschna. He resigned from his position in 1818 because of poor health, but was asked personally by the Czar to continue to help as far as he was able to. He died on 30 May 1830 in Ekaterinoslav

Ivan Nikolayevitsch Inzov was appointed president in 1818

1820-1823 Inzov was appointed governor-general of Bessarabia and Novorossiysk, so he took the office of the *Fuorsorgekomitee* with him to his capital, Kischinev. He expanded the scope and strength of the committee, in time supervising 286 villages. In 1833 he became the governor-general of all of South Russia, with the seat in Odessa, again the committee going with him. He died 25 May 1845 in Odessa

An official in the agency during this time (1835) was named Faddeyev

Eduard von Hahn was the next president (1845-1849). He had some disagreements with the Mennonite colonies, deposing some of the officials

Subsequent presidents were:

Baron Friedrich Rosen (1849-1853)

Baron Paul Mestmacher (1853-1854)

Vladimir A Islavin (1856-1858)

Alexander Hamm (1858-1866)

Fedor (Stanislavov) Lysander (1866-1867)

Vladimir (Woldemar) Ettinger (Oettinger) (1867-1871) - the last president

There were three branch offices: Ekaterinoslav, Kherson, Bessarabia

From 1818-1837 it was subject to the Ministry of the Interior, then 1837 to 1871 to the

Ministry of Royal Estates. Both of these Ministries had headquarters in St Petersburg

It was said that after 1818 the Committee issued endless orders, had cluttered files and mountains of paper work

Hermann Janzen, for some time secretary of the Molotschna Colony, was surveyer for the committee for many years

Kornelius Huebert was the secretary during the Crimean War, about 1850-1858; after that he was school teacher in Schoenwiese

The committee was dissolved in 1871, with the various colonies coming under local municipal administrations

Medical Corps (Red Cross) Unit (*Sanitaetsdienst*)

Organized with the beginning of World War I in August 1914

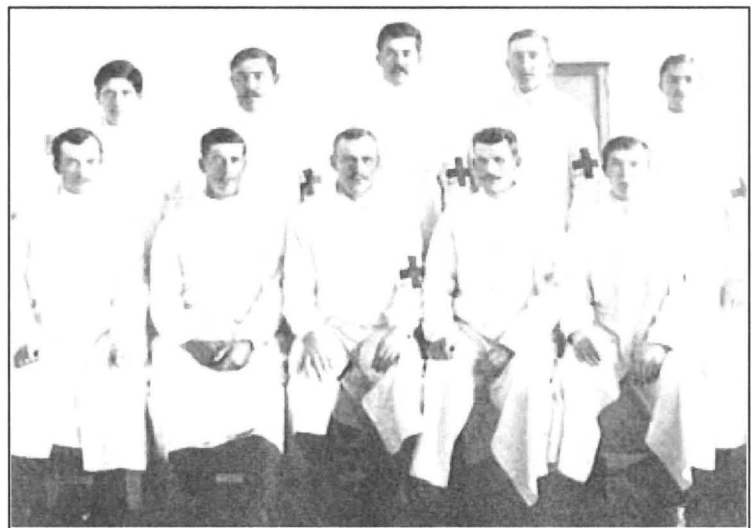
Johann Esau managed the finances and provisions for the Southern Armies (Ukraine, Caucasus, Black Sea and Romanian regions)

A large supply depot was organized in Ekaterinoslav as well as Military Hospital No. 6
Horse-drawn ambulances, 10-20 hospital trains and 2 hospital ships on the Black Sea needed to be supplied

Of the 6,000 Mennonites in the *Sanitaetsdienst* during World War I about 2,000 came under the jurisdiction of this unit



Medical Corps Headquarters



Sanitaeter of Military Hospital No 6 based in Ekaterinoslav

Pogrom

The Russo-Japanese War had not gone well. The Czarist government needed a scapegoat to blame. It blamed the Jews

Some time in October of 1905 (likely 18-22 October) the government planned a patriotic parade through the streets of Ekaterinoslav. The police and the firefighters went on strike, so the population was left without protection

The crowds in the "Patriotic Parade" soon grew, and became unruly. Starting with one Jewish business, they soon started shooting, trashing, robbing and finally murdering men, women and children

They set fire to Jewish property; 30 fires were counted in the city

120 persons were hidden in the Heese mill and granary

According to the newspaper reports 130 Jews were killed during these days, others estimated that there were 285 deaths

The Jewish backlash later made business much more difficult; they refused to finance all business transactions

The banks charged 10% yearly interest as well as their usual commission

As a result a number of Mennonite businesses sold and moved out of Ekaterinoslav, Wilhelm Heese and Johann Heinrich Toews

It should be noted that there were government instigated pogroms in a number of other Russian cities around this time. In Odessa 400 Jews were killed, 300 injured in a pogrom from 18-22 October 1905. There were also pogroms about this time in Berdyansk and Alexandrovsk

No mention is made of pogroms in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*

The *Christlicher Familienkalender* (written by Abram Kroeker) mentions that pogroms occurred in at least 100 Russian cities, but implied that the Jews were to some extent to blame. Kroeker totally missed the fact that this was a government planned attempt to deflect blame for its own failures

Politics

After the 1904/1905 promises of the government for reform, meetings were held to deal with some of the issues, and prepare for дума elections

Jakob Heinrich Heese, "President of the Lawyers Association" chaired a meeting to deal with these questions. He was, however, politically inexperienced.

As part of the political process Peter Heinrich Heese was declared representative of the German League for the Election Commission for the province of Ekaterinoslav, likely in 1905

Only 2 Mennonites were elected into the national дума

Hermann Abram Bermann from Ekaterinoslav

Peter Schroeder from the Crimea

At least 6 Mennonites were elected to Ekaterinoslav city council at some time: Johann Esau, Johann J Fast, Reimer, Johann J Thiessen, Dr Jakob Esau, and Heinrich Heese IV

Johann Esau - mayor of Ekaterinoslav 1905-1909, then again 1917-1919

Peter H Funk - appointed as judge

South Russia Exposition

Held in Ekaterinoslav in 1910

Managed by Johann Esau

The H Thiessen Mill of Ekaterinoslav was the only mill to receive a gold medal at the exposition

K Hildebrand Sons and Priess of Chortitza/Schoenwiese/Alexandrovsk won award at the exhibition

Said to have been a success

Schools

The government financed some schools; a Russian *Gymnasium*, a technical school, a grammar school for boys and one for girls, a six grade public school

The city fathers financed a technical school and two grammar schools for girls

The finance ministry built a school of commerce

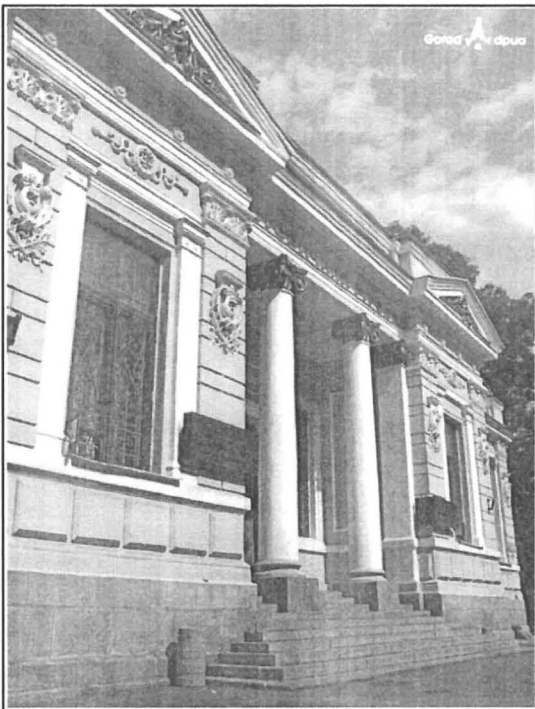
Private funding financed a mining institute, a teachers college, a music conservatory

University of Dnepropetrovsk

Established in 1918, while Johann Esau was the mayor

Esau was one of the officials who signed the appropriate documents

Esau's actual role in the establishment of the university is not known



Dmitri Yavornitzki Historical Museum
Dnepropetrovsk

Dmitri Yavornitzki Historical Museum

Founded in 1849 by Dmitri Yavornitzki

On the second floor, Room No 9 is dedicated to the memory of innocent victims of Stalin's brutality

The room features a huge Pyramid of Pictures of many of the victims, as well as documents of their sentencing, the subsequent "rehabilitation" and a brief biography

The picture of Gerhard Hamm of Zaporozhye is in the pyramid

There is also an ongoing count of the number of victims tabulated to have died during the "Stalin Holocaust"

DAVID HEINRICH EPP (1861-1934)

David Heinrich Epp was born on 30 May 1861 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony. His father was Heinrich David Epp, his mother Anna Siemens. Father Heinrich was a well known teacher and elder. The couple had six children, all of whom, except for the last child, David, died by the age of two years. Mother Anna died 8 January 1863, when David was nearly two years of age. Heinrich then married Elisabeth Perch on 26 July 1872, and had another three children. Heinrich, born in 1873, was a graduate of the Chortitza *Zentralschule* and of the History and Philology Faculty of the University of Moscow, taught Russian and Pedagogy at the Chortitza *Zentralschule* beginning in 1905. He later became principal of the school. Dietrich, born in 1875, was a graduate of the Chortitza *Zentralschule* and the St Petersburg Teachers' College, taught history and geography at the Chortitza *Zentralschule* beginning in 1895. Helena, born in 1877, married Bernhard H Pauls and eventually migrated to Canada.



David Heinrich Epp

David Heinrich Epp was educated in the local *Dorfschule*, followed by the Chortitza *Zentralschule*. He then taught in the *Dorfschulen* of Osterwick and Rosental in the Chortitza Colony from 1878 to 1889. In 1883 David married Anna Hamm; she was born 22 February 1864. The couple had three sons:

1. Heinrich - born 1884, married Magdaline Handsohl. He died in 1953
2. David - born 3 December 1886, attended university in Germany, became an electrical engineer, married Mathilde Fast. David was exiled and died 1937. Mathilde migrated to Canada; she died 13 February 1957 in Winnipeg, Manitoba
3. Gerhard - born 1890, died 1890

In 1886 David was chosen as minister by the Chortitza Mennonite congregation. In 1889 he was asked to be the minister of the Ekaterinoslav Mennonite Church, at the same time also being a teacher in the Mennonite elementary school. Once there he also gave religious instruction in the local business college.

In 1905 David began publication of *Der Botschafter* in Ekaterinoslav, with David the chief editor, Johann Thiessen the publisher. The newspaper was created in an attempt to bond Mennonites together, although they were scattered throughout Russia. The first issue appeared 13 August 1905. There were usually 6 pages, with religious and devotional material, but also discussing the events of the day in the fields of politics, education and science; there were about 2 pages of advertising. Through his work as minister of the church, David became aware of the special needs of those with mental illness. David campaigned vigorously, using lectures, pamphlets and articles, for the establishment of a Mennonite mental institution. This eventually resulted in the formation of Bethania Mental Hospital in 1910 in the Chortitza Colony.

Frequent strikes in Ekaterinoslav as well as other difficulties made it necessary to transfer

the printing of *Der Botschafter* to Berdyansk in 1907, where H A Ediger was the publisher. David continued on as long-distant editor, but finally moved to Berdyansk in 1912. Together with other German journals, *Der Botschafter* ceased publication, likely in October of 1914, due to the anti-German sentiment caused by the outbreak of World War I

David was interested in Mennonite history, theology and in writing. While in Ekaterinoslav he published a number of books:

Heinrich Epp (the story of David's father) printed in Leipzig (1897)

Die Chortitzer Mennoniten (1889) - for the centennial celebration of the founding of the Chortitza Colony. Originally self-published, printed by A Schultze of Odessa

Kurze Erkl  rung und Erl  uterungen zum Katechismus (1896) - for young men and women preparing for baptism, intended to be inspirational and instructive. It was popular, so a second edition was printed in 1898. A third edition appeared after his death, in 1941, printed in Rosthern, Saskatchewan

J Cornies, Zuege aus seinem Leben und Wirken (1909) - reprinted in 1946 as Book 3 of the Echo-Verlag series

Die Memriker Ansiedlung (1910) - a centennial booklet

David also published *Heinrich Heese und seine Zeit* as a series in *Der Botschafter* in 1910; this was later included in the Echo-Verlag series, Book 8 printed in 1952. Other articles included *Die Entstehung der mennonitischen Grossindustrie* and *Meister Peter Lepp* which were also published in 1910.

Especially before he became an editor himself, he contributed many articles to *Mennonitische Blaetter* and to the *Odessaer Zeitung*. Many of his articles later appeared in the *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch* as well as in *Unser Blatt*. Towards the end of his life he also contributed to *Der Bote* of Rosthern, Saskatchewan. David seemed to have a propensity to write articles for centennial celebrations, for example "*Jakob Hoeppner, in seinem hundertjaehrigen Todestage am 4 Maerz 1926*" as well as "*Hundertjahresfeier der Lichtenauer Gemeinde und Kirche am 31 October 1926.*"

Having moved to Berdyansk David devoted all his time and effort as editor of *Der Botschafter* and to church work. When *Der Botschafter* ceased publication at the outbreak of World War I his principal source of income vanished, leaving him impoverished.

A *Glaubenskommission* was appointed in 1910 at a meeting in Schoensee, Molotschna, of the *Allgemeine Bundeskonferenz der Mennoniten Gemeinden in Russland*. This committee was to deal with the problems facing Mennonites, especially the government legislation that labeled them as a sect. Elected in 28 January 1910 were Elder Abram Goerz of Ohrloff, Heinrich Braun of Neu-Halbstadt and David H Epp (as an alternate to the ailing Elder Isaak Dyck). Later that year, at a meeting held 26-28 October 1910, Dyck definitely withdrew, and David's appointment was confirmed. In 1911 David was appointed chairman, and Kornelius Unrau was added as treasurer. At the conference in Nikolaipol in 1912, the name of the committee was changed to *Kommission fuer Kirchenangelegenheiten* (KfK). In this office David performed a valuable service to the Mennonite churches, making repeated trips to St Petersburg, securing as favourable conditions as possible. It is not certain how long David remained on the commission, but his name is not mentioned for the executive of 1922 or thereafter.

In 1913 David became editor of the *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch*. This Russian Mennonite publication which annually reviewed activities in the area of missions, schools, general church life

and charitable institutions was edited by Heinrich Dirks from 1904 to 1911. Dirks had been a missionary and was elder of the Gnadenfeld Mennonite Church. David Epp took over as editor under the authority of the *Allgemeine Bundeskonferenz*, and enlarged and enriched the publication. He included historical articles on Mennonite congregations and institutions as well as annual minutes of conferences. The tenth issue, covering the year 1913, printed in 1914, had 226 pages. The same edict which closed other publications also halted further issues of the *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch*.

A personal loss for the Epps was a robbery of their house in 1920.

In 1922 David was appointed as a member of the committee of three, to distribute food packages for the American Mennonite Relief to the Mennonites in Berdyansk. He himself also requested a food draft via the *Mennonitische Rundschau* on 7 June 1922. The Epps must have been in dire straits! Their address at that time was Kolonie 2te Linie No 4. David was among those signing a letter of thanks for the food packages written by Elder Leonard Sudermann of the Berdyansk congregation in late 1922.

In 1923 David was asked by the Lichtenau Mennonite congregation of the Molotschna, to serve as a chief minister, especially to help heal some rifts that had occurred. With delicacy, tact, clear vision and great skill he was able to help restore the function of the church. It could have been at this time that he was ordained as elder, since up to that time he was called a minister. In 1927 he was called to be the elder of his home Chortitza Mennonite congregation. He worked with diligence, under increasingly difficult circumstances. Ministers had no legal rights, so the Communists hindered his every step. He was repeatedly taxed so heavily that neither he nor the congregation could raise the necessary funds. He finally resigned in 1931, but continued his pastoral care, working privately.

David Heinrich Epp suffered a number of strokes, and died 30 May 1934. His wife Anna, who had also been ill, died shortly after David, also in 1934. David was the last ordained elder of the Chortitza Mennonite Church.

Sources:

Der Botschafter, many pages

Friesen, P M, *Die Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruederschaft in Russland (1789-1910)*,

Halbstadt, Taurida, 1911, pp 530, 577, 615, 616, 621, 632, 670, 673, 694, 700, 702, 736
Mennonite Encyclopedia, Vol II, pp 174, 235; Vol III, pp 218, 650, 651

Unser Blatt many pages

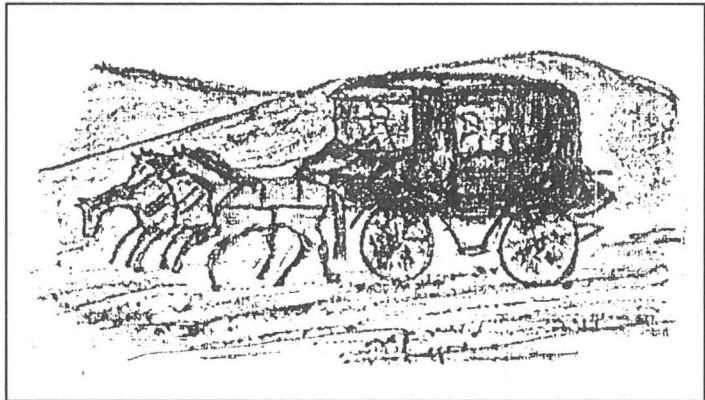
JOHANN JAKOB ESAU
(Ivan Jakowlewitsch Esau)
(1859-1940)

Johann Jakob Esau was born 25 July 1859 in Halbstadt, Molotschna. His parents were Jakob Esau and Katharina Neufeld. Jakob himself came from a poor family, but Katharina's parents were wealthy. Possibly using funding from his wife's family, Jakob originally did well in the grain business. Unfortunately a ship involved in the trade with Italy was said to have sunk in the Black Sea, although there were rumours that it actually had been attacked by the Turks. With this loss the family was in financial difficulty. They had eight children: Katharina (1849), Jakob (1856), Johann (1859), Kornelius (1862), Elisabeth, Margaret (1864), Marie and Julie. Jakob and Kornelius lived and died in Russia, Jakob dying in 1927, Kornelius in 1920 of typhus. The children, including Johann, presumably completed the *Dorfschule* in Halbstadt.

In 1869 the heir apparent, Crown Prince Alexander III, travelled through the Molotschna area on his way back from the Crimea. The Mennonites prepared an agricultural display, and also made a presentation to the royal party. Responding to the criticism by the government that Mennonites were not integrating into the Russian educational system, they announced the "Alexander Stipends." These would allow three Mennonite youths to attend a *Gymnasium* at some Russian locale outside the Mennonite colonies, two from the Molotschna, one from Chortitza. The Board of Guardians (*Fuersorgekomitee*) also played a part in the organization of these scholarships.

The offer of these scholarships was published in the colonies, but there was no response. The Russian schools would completely russify the students, it was feared, so no one wanted to risk their children. Jakob Esau, *Schultz* of Halbstadt village at the time, being in financial straits, felt that this would give his sons a chance at a good education, so he applied for Jakob and Johann. There was some reluctance to accept two people from the same family, but after the offer was made public two more times with no additional applications, the boys were accepted.

In August of 1869 the parents took Jakob and Johann to Ekaterinoslav by wagon. Mother Esau had outfitted her boys in the traditional Mennonite style with woolen underwear, scarves and other apparel. Johann commented wryly that it was too much of a good thing, so some of the clothing was actually sent back home. The boys were both registered in a classical *Gymnasium*, and good private accommodations were found. They returned home for Christmas, causing quite a stir with their school uniforms.



On the way to school in Ekaterinoslav

Studies seem to have gone well for both Johann and Jakob. After completion of the *Gymnasium* Jakob studied medicine in Kiev, Johann went to the Polytechnical Institute in Riga, where he graduated as a mechanical engineer in 1884. They had learned their subject matter well, and in the process learned to speak flawless Russian.

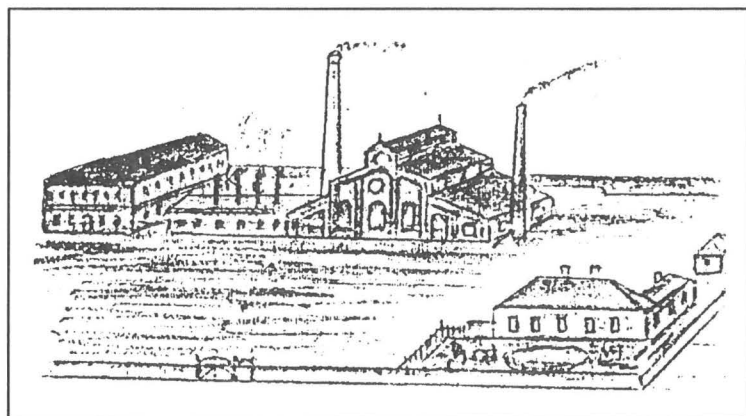
Having completed their education, both brothers felt it as a duty to offer their services to the Molotschna Colony. Since they could not obtain positions in their particular fields they were released from their obligations, and sought employment elsewhere. Jakob became colony physician for the Chortitza Colony, then later opened up a practice as an ophthalmologist (eye doctor) in Ekaterinoslav, also opening up a small hospital.

Johann in the meantime wished to obtain practical experience in his field. He obtained employment with a ship-building company in Sevastopol as an ordinary labourer, not letting his employer know that he was a qualified engineer. From ordinary fitter and mechanic he soon advanced to the assembly line. Having learned what he had in mind, Johann left Sevastopol in 1887, then followed a similar procedure in Baku, where he worked in the oil fields. While still in Baku he received a letter from his brother Jakob, informing him that a position as designer/construction engineer at the Lepp & Wallmann factory in Chortitza was available. Johann travelled to the Chortitza Colony in 1889, and was hired for that position.

Also in 1889 Johann married Margaretha Toews of Ekaterinoslav, daughter of Jakob Heinrich Toews and Margaretha Heese. Their four children were all born in Ekaterinoslav:

1. Nicolai - born 7 August 1890, died at about one year of age
2. Marie - born 17 September 1892, also died at about one year of age
3. Paul - born 14 August 1894, began his studies at the Polytechnical Institute in Riga in September 1914, achieving a degree in chemistry, graduating in 1916. Joined the *Sanitaetsdienst*, then continued studies in Germany in 1918, completing them in 1924, when he joined his family in the USA. Paul continued his work as a chemist, contributing many scientific papers. He married Esther Siemens 25 June 1929. They had no children. He died 20 August 1987 in Walnut Creek, California
4. Katherine - born 3 April 1898, studied agriculture, first in Russia, then in Germany. She taught botany at the University of California, authored six books in her field of studies and many scientific papers. She was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in the United States, and in 1989 received the National Medal of Science, the highest honour accorded scientists and engineers in the United States. She died in 4 June 1997, at the age of 99, in Santa Barbara, California

Now a married man, Johann did his best to please his new boss at the Lepp & Wallmann factory. He was offered a promotion, but actually wanted to strike out for business on his own. The



Metalworks Esau & Co of Ekaterinoslav

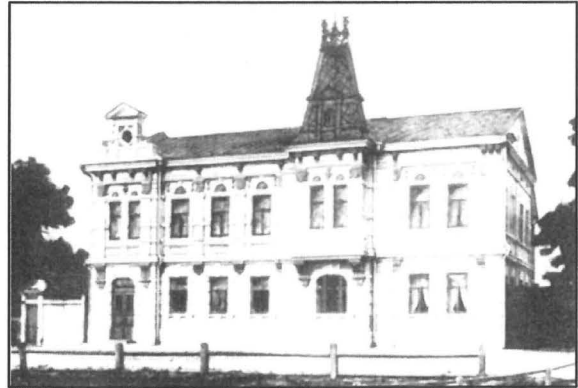
Esau moved to Ekaterinoslav, where Johann purchased a lot west of the city near Brianskij Zawod. He built a metal works factory, where he produced transmissions, ploughs and special equipment. Since he had little in the way of financial resources he borrowed money from his brother Jakob and his wife's uncle, Heinrich Heese II. "Metalworks Esau & Co" was busy with many orders, but the cash flow was sometimes a problem. So it was that Johann's silent partners

were on occasion dissatisfied. One day he was approached by Engineer Goriainow of the Briansk Steel Works, who bought out the two silent partners, and financed expansion of the plant by the addition of a blast furnace. Several months later, in 1895, a Belgian steel company, wishing to have more plants in Russia, bought the company, paying Johann double the amount he had invested in it. They offered him the position of general manager, which he accepted, continuing in that position four years.

With financial stability assured, Johann built a new house, Number 66 on Kazatschaya Street. It was situated in a veritable Mennonite ghetto, with a number of Mennonite factories and mills in the neighbourhood, as well as other Mennonite residences and a church/school building.

In July of 1903 Johann was given honorary citizenship, a rare privilege bestowed on him by the Czar. Now that he was a citizen and owned property in the city of Ekaterinoslav, Johann could enter civic politics. This he did with his usual vigour. In 1903 he was elected to city council, whereupon he gave up his position as general manager of the steel mill, feeling that civic projects gave him ample opportunity to apply his engineering expertise. By 1904 Johann had taken over management of the public works division of Ekaterinoslav. A year later, likely in 1905, the mayor died. Johann, at the previous election having had the most votes of any of the councillors, according to the law, became the mayor. When the term was completed in 1906 his position as mayor was confirmed by his re-election.

Johann used both his engineering skills and his civic position for the long term good of the city, although it seems that not everything went smoothly with the mayor's plans. Johann commented "With great difficulty, as it is always the case in larger assemblies where different ideas



The Johann Esau house about 1900



Ekaterinoslav City Hall (opposite the street lamp) where Johann Esau served as mayor

are at cross-purposes, we nonetheless were able to establish that the city should obtain a loan of five million." This infusion of money helped the city to improve the water works and obtain fire fighting equipment, allowed the building of a second streetcar line, and provided the capital for construction of a number of schools and a large market hall. The added city revenues would facilitate repayment of the original loan.

Following the humiliating defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, there was considerable unrest in the country, with widespread demands for reform. The military commander of the region could not guarantee safety in

Ekaterinoslav until a state of emergency had been declared and Cossack troops arrived. Johann and his family actually hid in his brother's hospital. During this time the Czar's government attempted to shift blame for the defeat of war onto the Jewish population and actually implemented pogroms in over 100 cities in Russia. In Ekaterinoslav this occurred in October of 1905, with at least 285 people losing their lives. One evening a group of Jewish mothers with children sought refuge in the Esau home.

As a representative of the city Johann spent considerable time in St Petersburg negotiating with various government ministers and agencies. In December of 1906, in recognition of his public service, Johann was awarded a medal of the Order of St Stanislav, third class. Over the years he received a number of additional medals, the last one in 1915. The Czar did not get around to presenting it to Johann, being busy with other priorities during the war.

In 1909 Johann was advised not to seek re-election as mayor due to the rising anti-German sentiment in the country, as well as some personal animosity. But his public service record had not gone unnoticed. He was asked to be a candidate for mayoralty elections in Kharkov, and also for Baku, but he did not accept either challenge. He did accept the position of supervisor of construction and business management of the South Russian Agricultural Exposition held in Ekaterinoslav in 1910.

In the meantime Johann continued his own personal business ventures. Together with a number of other partners he had built a brickyard on the east shore of the Dniepr River, using the white sand of the river bank. He appointed his brother Kornelius as manager. Seven or eight years later, about 1914, this was sold. He was shareholder of a company which purchased, expanded and managed a coke plant.

With the outbreak of World War I Johann was offered the position of managing the finances and provisions for the Medical Services for the Southern Russian Armies, the Caucasus, the Black Sea and Romanian regions as well as Ukraine. This meant outfitting horse-drawn ambulances, ten to twenty hospital trains, as well as two hospital ships on the Black Sea. A large supply depot had to be organized in Ekaterinoslav, as well as new hospitals. Supplies came in from Moscow and Japan, with 3,000 horses coming from Siberia. Of the 6,000 Mennonites who served in the Medical Corps (*Sanitaeter*) during World War I, about 2,000 were under his jurisdiction.

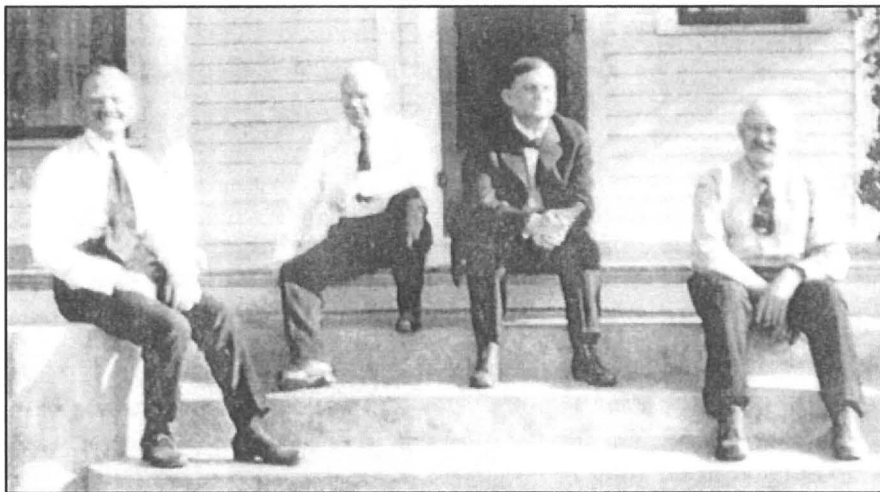
Probably anticipating unrest and troubled times in Russia, Johann gave money to a family friend to deposit in a Swiss bank account. This would be security if they ever had to leave the country in a hurry. With defeat in arms and ever more difficult conditions at home, revolution broke out. The Czar abdicated in February of 1917, and the moderate socialist government of Alexander Kerensky took over. During this time the war was continued, so the medical corps continued to function. In November the Bolsheviks swept into power; they very much wanted to end the war. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed on 18 March 1918 stopped the war in the east, but also allowed Ukraine to be independent, and for Germany to actively supervise this independence by sending in occupying troops.

When the hostilities ended, attempts were made to recover some of the material that had allowed the medical services to operate. Supply warehouses were rented with considerable difficulty. Then they waited. Of the 100 trains that were to return their materials only one showed up; the Mennonite medical doctor in charge handed over all the supplies, as well as the cash box. All the other trains were robbed either at the front, or on their way to the supply depots. Johann was disappointed, although not surprised.

Hetman General Paul Skoropadsky was appointed the first Ukrainian head of state, and there was reasonable law and order. Johann was asked to again be a candidate as mayor of Ekaterinoslav, and was elected. With difficult circumstances Johann tried to do what was for the general good of the city. One thing he did was sign the documentation to establish the University of Ekaterinoslav. In 1918 German troops occupied the city, the commanders being billeted at the Esau residence. With the total cessation of hostilities to conclude World War I, the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was nullified, and German troops were withdrawn from Ukraine. Knowing there would be no retribution, a revolutionary band broke into the mayor's office, demanding his resignation and all the money available. He handed over the remaining 200,000R, and left, realizing that his time was up.

The retreating German Army offered safe passage to anyone who wished to flee to Germany with them. The Esau family accepted the offer and left for Berlin by train on 20 December 1918, accompanying 700 air force personnel. Their personal belongings were confiscated, and they had to pay substantial bribes along the way, but they safely arrived in Berlin on 5 January 1919. Apparently the day after the Esaus left Ekaterinoslav, posters had appeared in the city looking for Johann, the new city managers labelling him as a counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and an enemy of the people.

When the Esau family arrived in Berlin, a small putsch was underway, and they could hear gunfire from their hotel, but things did settle down to some extent. Johann had been able to sell their house in Ekaterinoslav, providing enough funds for them to live comfortably in Germany for several years. Paul continued his education as a chemical engineer at a technical college in Charlottenberg, graduating with a degree in 1924 (he actually stayed after the family had left to complete his degree).



The *Studienkommission*: A A Friesen, Johann J Esau, B H Unruh and C H Warkentin

Katherine also continued her studies at an agricultural college, graduating in 1922, and even found appropriate work in Germany. Margaretha found the food in Berlin not nutritious enough, so she and Johann stayed in Switzerland for a year.

While in Berlin Johann did not forget his Mennonite roots. In R u s s i a a *Studienkommission* had been organized to assess

the possibility of immigration to North America. A A Friesen (chairman), B H Unruh (secretary) and C H Warkentin had been commissioned to investigate. They left Russia on 1 January 1920, travelling by way of the Crimea and Constantinople, reaching Germany in April. Since neither of the chosen alternate members had been able to go, on their way through Berlin the Commission asked Johann to accompany them on the trip. They first sought aid for their constituency from the Mennonites in The Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany, then left for America, arriving in New

York on 13 June 1920. The delegates travelled extensively in Canada and the United States, and negotiated with officials in both countries regarding the possibility of migration. A A Friesen and C H Warkentin remained in North America, B H Unruh and Johann Esau returned to Europe.

Back in Germany both Unruh and Esau continued to work for the benefit of their Russian Mennonite constituency. They worked through the *Verein der Deutschen Mennonitenhilfe*, B H Unruh as a full member, Johann as negotiator with government officials.

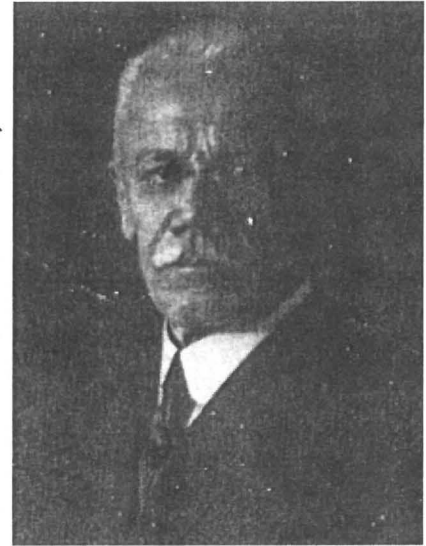
It seems that Johann's long-term goal had for some time been to immigrate to the United States; probably the trip with the *Studienkommission* had helped him scout out the possibilities of such a move. On 25 October 1922 Johann, his wife and daughter left Germany, crossing to the seaport by train, then across the Atlantic Ocean by ship, eventually entering the United States at Ellis Island. They arrived in Reedley, California, where there was a large Mennonite community, on 16 November. Johann proposed to buy a farm for Katherine to manage, but she convinced him that she first needed to learn the language and the American style of management. Paul was completing his education in Germany, and did not join them until 1924.

In California the Esaus established a safe home for their children, and had "a happy home life." Johann made no serious attempt to continue on in his profession, citing his age (63) and lack of knowledge of English as the reasons. Despite difficulty with the language of the newly chosen home, first Johann on 4 June and Margaretha on 7 November became naturalized citizens of the United States in 1928. Johann was described as being five feet, eight inches tall, having grey eyes and grey hair. Margaretha was five feet, four and a half inches tall, with blue-grey eyes and grey hair. At that time the Esaus were living in San Francisco.

The Esaus did maintain some indirect connections with their Russian Mennonite roots. They seem to have been avid readers of *Der Bote*, a newspaper established by, and extensively read by, recent Russian immigrants. They contributed financially to the Mennonite high school in Rosthern, Saskatchewan.

Perhaps following their daughter, Johann and Margaretha spent their last years in Davis, California. Here they celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1939. It was also in Davis that Johann died unexpectedly of a heart attack on the morning of 14 September 1940. The funeral service, held in a local church, was attended by many friends. He was buried in the local cemetery. In his obituary, written by wife Margaretha, it is mentioned that he was now relieved of "all small and large worries." She hoped that God in his mercy had accepted Johann into his presence. Margaretha herself died on 28 October 1955, also in Davis, California.

After Johann's death son Paul made it his personal project to make sure that the Mennonite public would not forget his father, and the important role he played in Russia. Paul, for example, published an article in *Der Bote* on 3 May 1978, outlining in detail the significance of the various honours bestowed on Johann by the government of the Czar. The Esau family, Paul, his wife Esther and sister Katherine established a fund from the Esau estate, distributing substantial amounts of money to Bethel College in Newton, Kansas, and Canadian Mennonite Bible College of Winnipeg.



Johann Jakob Esau

The principal reason was to further liberal arts education, and to honour their parents. Despite the Esaus having been born as German-speaking Mennonites, and having lived in the United States since 1922, the 2 June 1982 agreement lists the parents to be honoured by their Russian names, as Ivan Yakovlevich Esau and Margarita Yakovlevna Esau.

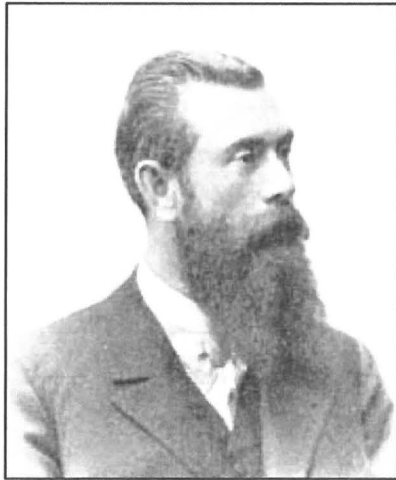
Johann Jakob Esau was the product of an experiment which in some ways worked, but perhaps with mixed blessings. He became well integrated into the Russian educational system and society. He learned his subject matter well, being sought after for his professional expertise as engineer almost wherever he went. He still did maintain various aspects of German culture and language throughout, although he seemed to glory in the Russified version of his own name well beyond the time when it was necessary. He did participate in Mennonite affairs to some extent, at least he read and wrote for Mennonite newspapers. The impression is, however, that while he was called a "faithful member" of his church, that his religious convictions were probably not his primary concern. Certainly his minimal contact with Mennonites once he had settled in California could indicate that his priorities lay elsewhere.

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PETER HEINRICH HEESE
(1852-1911)

Peter Heinrich Heese was born 2 June 1852 in Ekaterinoslav. His grandfather Heinrich Heese I had migrated from Prussia to Russia in 1808, finally arriving in the Chortitza Colony. From 1829 to 1842 he taught in the *Zentralschule* in Ohrloff, Molotschna; thereafter he played a part in the founding of the Chortitza *Zentralschule*. Peter's father Heinrich was the tenth child, but eldest surviving son of Heinrich Heese I, and owned a mill in Ekaterinoslav, but also functioned as a lawyer, being helped by the fact that he was fluent in Russian. His mother was Maria Thiessen, granddaughter of original settler Heinrich Thiessen.



Peter Heinrich Heese

Peter Heinrich Heese completed the Chortitza *Zentralschule*, where one of his beloved teachers was Elder Heinrich Epp. He then attended a classical *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav, entering in the middle class, thereafter continuing as an excellent student to the eighth level. After this he enrolled in a technical school in Moscow, but had to withdraw after two semesters because of a nervous condition. In the school year 1877-1878 he taught in the Gnadenfeld *Zentralschule*, then the following year he taught mathematics at the Ohrloff *Vereinsschule*. But even here his health did not permit him to continue his teaching career.

On 6 September 1879 Peter married Helena Schroeder, daughter of estate owner David David Schroeder. They never had children. The couple moved onto a part of the Schroeder estate, Ober-Maitshokrak near Melitopol, which obviously was given as inheritance to his wife, Helena. After this, much of Peter's time was occupied with organizing the farming operations of the estate. Being a close friend, historian Peter Martin Friesen spent two years on the estate, 1896-1898, recovering his health.

In 1880 Peter was made co-president of the Ohrloff School Board, together with Johann Karl Klatt of Ohrloff. Soon thereafter he was chosen as a member of the Molotschna School Board, where he and Johann Klatt served until 1884 under the presidency of Andreas Voth. After 1884 Peter and Johann alternated as president of the board, building on the foundations implemented by Voth. Peter was a very gifted man, had a commanding personality and was intensely interested in the principles of education. Apparently he was also able to negotiate the differences between the teaching staff and some of the administrative and church officials. He could, when necessary, be "sharp as vinegar" but at other times as oil on troubled waters. During this time many reforms were introduced to the village schools in the Molotschna. New methods of teaching Russian, a German reader, outlines for Bible, church history and German grammar and the use of Russian to teach arithmetic were introduced. It was called the "Golden Age" of education in the Molotschna. Through his function on the school board Peter often had to travel, for example to Simferopol, Odessa or even St Petersburg, which he did at his own expense. When a new school program required funding, Peter often stepped in to help. If he was repaid he accepted it, but he never asked.

During this time the *Marientaubstummenschule* (School for the Deaf and Dumb) was being

established in Tiege, Molotschna, The charter was granted in 1881, but the program did not actually start until 1885. In 1890 the school moved into its own building. Peter played a significant role in the financing of this new building.

1896 seems to have been a year of crisis for Peter. His wife Helena died 9 January 1896, and since they had no children, Peter led quite a lonely life. Because he was not able to carry out all of his educational ideas he left the Molotschna School Board with bitter feelings, and basically withdrew from public Mennonite life. Towards the end of his term "he set his ladder too steeply, so that even his supporters could not follow." He also became an "eccentric Russian patriot." He himself spoke Russian at home, demanding that his employees follow his example.

Peter remained a man of religious orientation, but for the last four years of his life did not set foot in any church. He studied and explored various religious faiths feeling that they were all of equal value as long as they promoted diligence and friendship. He valued Jesus Christ as teacher and example, but could not entirely accept him as Saviour. He was critical of most ministers, and had special scorn for the wealthy "believers," the one notable exception being Peter Schmidt of Steinbach. Peter Heese continued his philanthropic work both in Mennonite society and in the lives of the other people around him. As an example, during a famine in 1892, he supplied food for an entire Tatar village until the next crop came in. In the summer of 1907 alone, using P M Friesen as conduit, he gave 15,000 rubles to various people, most of whom never discovered who their benefactor was.

Because of continuing "health" problems in 1893, Peter spent a considerable period of time on the Riviera in France to recuperate.

In 1898 Peter sold his estate, and in 1903 moved into Ekaterinoslav, where he became a part owner of a steam-powered flour mill, together with his nephew P H Heese. He concerned himself very little with the business of running the mill, rather occupying his time and efforts to help various charities. In 1904 he was elected to the Ekaterinoslav City Council. He was also chairman of an association of destitute students, member of a scientific society, chairman of a board of a *Gymnasium*, member of the boards of two schools of commerce, member of the administration of a reform youth centre, member of a committee helping poor Jews, member of an organization designed to help various agencies on an emergency basis. He did not restrict his membership in the various organizations according to the payment of fees; he often gave over and above that expected. He was prompt in attending all the meetings required, and according to one biographer was highly thought of, with his advice being well received .

In 1905 Peter took an active interest in politics, but even there he needed to confront sacrifice, and personal slights. While he being progressive, he was still a staunch opponent of using force on people. He was a candidate for the Cadet Party, but did not approve of their tactics. There is no record of him having participated in an election.

In 1906 Peter came to the conclusion that Ekaterinoslav needed an independent progressive Russia- language newspaper. He negotiated with the persons he had appointed, then simply paid the bills. One stipulation he did insist on was that no work was to be done on Sundays. This meant that his paper would not appear on Mondays, whereas all the others did.

In the last few years of his life Peter withdrew even more from public life, although he continued his philanthropic work, in particular helping the poor, those with tuberculosis and those with learning disorders. The ideas of Tolstoy played an important role in this phase of his life.

On the evening of 31 January 1911 Peter seemed to feel well, participating in conversation

with the family of his nephew, particularly with one of the sons. The next morning, 1 February, he was found on the floor, dead, with a pillow tucked under his head. The presumption was that he had fallen, could not climb back into bed, pulled down the pillow, and died. The doctor who was called in felt the Peter had died of a stroke. The funeral took place on 4 February 1911. A memorial service in Peter's honor was held at the house church of P M Friesen in Sevastopol, since Friesen could not attend the actual funeral. Peter was initially buried in Ekaterinoslav, but then was reburied in Taschtschenak in one grave with his wife

Friesen considered Peter Heinrich Heese to be "one of the great men of our people, not only on the basis of his positions, his talent and education, but also his exemplary orientation and his seldom equaled philanthropy." He considered him to be second only to Johann Cornies in influencing the development of Mennonite society in Russia.

Evaluation of a life principally through the eyes of a close friend is difficult at the best of times. Peter Heese was not particularly well educated to assume the responsibility of restructuring an educational program, and the education he did have was more oriented toward a technical field. He taught for only two years, one year each in different schools. This is not a ringing endorsement for his expertise in the field of education. The several references to his "nervous condition" makes one wonder about his psychiatric stability. Reading between the lines one has to assume that he was somewhat of an autocrat, not the easiest person to deal with. Judging from the great lengths Friesen goes to in defining exactly what Heese did believe, one is almost driven to the conclusion that Heese was a secular, not a faith Mennonite, and that he bordered on being fundamentally a Russian patriot. One can say that Peter does seem to have had considerable administrative skills with limits to the opposition he would accept. His philanthropy to both Mennonites and others showed that he considered himself to be a citizen of the world.

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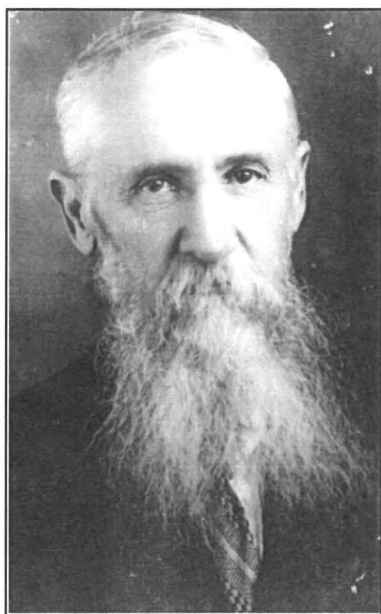
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DIETRICH KORNELIUS THIESSEN
(1870-1937)



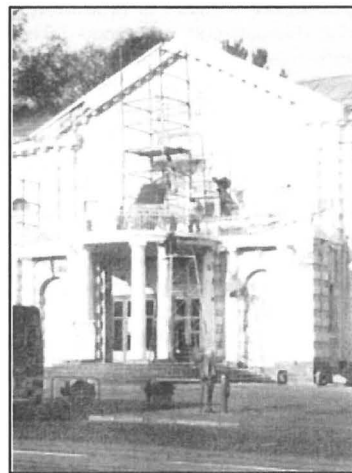
Dietrich Kornelius Thiessen
1870-1937

Dietrich Kornelius Thiessen was born 27 December 1870 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony. His father, Kornelius Otto Thiessen, was born in Stolzenburg near Danzig, migrating to Chortitza in 1818. He was first a tailor, then bred sheep, and in 1844 built a treadmill in Chortitza. That same year he married Katharina Rempel of Neuhorst, Chortitza Colony. The couple had 14 children (some sources say 15). In 1849 Kornelius bought a second treadmill, then in 1866 sold both treadmills, and went into the iron business. In this business he became wealthy.

Dietrich was born in 1870, the second last of the Thiessen children. He likely attended the local Chortitza village school, then the *Zentralschule*. In 1886 Dietrich served as an apprentice in a machine shop in Chortitza, and in 1889 was on the staff of a New York factory. His father was wealthy enough to send him to Germany for further studies, where he completed the Technical University in Hildburghausen in 1894, after which he also completed the Technical University in Dresden. He returned to Russia and was examined by the Technical Building Committee of the Ministry of the Interior to determine his right to practice. He received his certification on 23 December 1897, Certificate No 505.

Dietrich was employed by a construction firm, G A List of Moscow from April 1897 until March 1898. Thereafter he seems to have moved to Ekaterinoslav, where, beginning in April 1902, he was employed as an architect for the Ekaterinoslav Railway Administration until March 1905. He was a member of the local branch of the Railway Association. In May 1910 he was assistant to the architect for the Ekaterinoslav Administration. He returned to the railway in 1925, when he was an instructor in the Ekaterinoslav Railway College of Technology. Beginning in 1927, and continuing until 1930 he held various administrative positions, mostly with the Dnepropetrovsk Technical College.

Probably during his time of employment, but likely also in the periods when he held no position, he set up a successful architectural practice and accepted private commissions. Apparently his office was located at Prospekt Dom Vebera. He designed the house of Johann Heinrich Toews, built on the corner of Ekaterinsky Prospekt and Shirokaya Street. Designed in a neoclassical style, this three story building suits its urban site very well. Daughter Elsa recalls at least two other projects in which he was involved. A large house was built for a wealthy couple in Chortitza, but never completed. He also built something for Baron Falz-Fein, but the exact nature of the project is not known. The proposed new expansion of the Mennonite church in



House of Culture in
Schoenwiese

Ekaterinoslav was designed by Dietrich, but was never built because of the onset of World War I in 1914. Dietrich was the architect for the “House of Culture” built in Schoenwiese in 1924-1925.

Dietrich married Julie Johann Martens on 15 August 1903 in Ekaterinoslav. Julie was born in 1881, and was the fourth of five children of estate owner Johann Johann Martens (who was the grandson of the very wealthy estate owner Wilhelm Aron Martens) and Katharina Esau, sister of Mayor Johann Esau. The couple had five children:

1. Konstantin - born 12 July 1904 in Chortitza, he married and lived out his life in Uzbekistan as a farmer, died 4 March 1983 in Peszchanni, Uzbekistan
2. Victor - born 8 April 1906 in Chortitza, executed 1941 in Leningrad, where he was studying art
3. Paul - born 10 December 1907 in Chortitza, died about 1922 at the Thiessen dacha of a gun accident
4. Elsa - born 9 February 1912 in Ekaterinoslav, married Emile Schulein about 1937, had 2 children who died as infants, married Ivan Bereznoi 1947, daughter Olga born 2 October 1948, went to Germany in 1996, still alive 9 February 2007
5. Hermann - born 28 August 1914 in Ekaterinoslav, executed about 1939, likely in Baku

While the eldest three children are listed as being born in Chortitza, the family actually seems to have had their residence in Ekaterinoslav from 1904 onward.

About 1904 Dietrich started to build his own house in Ekaterinoslav, “near the Lutheran



Julie and Dietrich with Paul, Konstantin and Victor, 1908

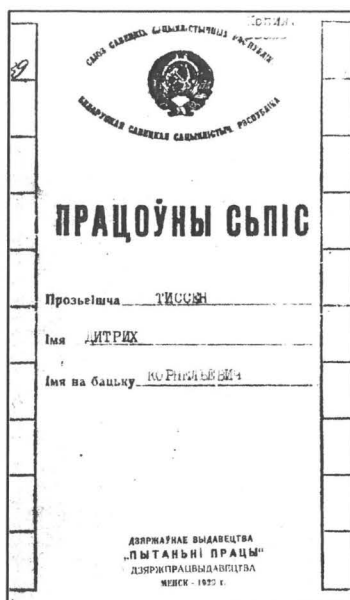
Church, on the right side....” When the house was nearing completion in 1907 Dietrich’s elder brother went bankrupt in Germany, and for some peculiar reason Dietrich was left to pay the bills. Basically that made it impossible to finish the house. With Julie’s small inheritance, a small dacha in the village of Ivanovka and Dietrich’s architectural practice, however, the family was able to survive the financial set-back. Peter Heinrich Heese, in his description of the church in Ekaterinoslav, mentions one of the members being an architect. This was undoubtedly Dietrich Thiessen.

With the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917 the family was forced to move into two rooms in a nearby house owned by the Lutheran Church. They were able to survive the severe famine of 1921-1922 by

moving out to their dacha in Ivanovka. While in Ivanovka son Paul was killed in a gun accident. Makhno bandits overran the area, brutally beating Julie in the process. Apparently Dietrich never fully recovered from the emotional trauma of these episodes.



The Thiessen family, likely in 1928



Service Record of Dietrich Thiessen issued in Minsk in 1929

Towards the end of 1922 the family moved back to Ekaterinoslav. From April 1923 onward Dietrich was again employed as an architect in various capacities, in 1925 returning to what appears to have been his specialty, the railway. He continued his architectural work at least into May 1930. Until this time the family lived comparatively well in Ekaterinoslav.

In 1932 the family moved to Batum, Georgia, but left, still in 1932, because they could find no living quarters. Being near the Turkish border, they attempted to cross to freedom. Despite having two pieces of identification verifying their non-German background (including some documentation of membership in the *Verband der Buerger Hollandischer Herkunft*) they were unable to leave, since the neighbouring countries, under pressure from the Soviets, were not willing to accept Russian refugees. Julie sewed the documents into a pillow slip for safe-keeping, but in their subsequent travels the pillow slip was inadvertently sold, and the documents therefore lost.



Julie and Elsa in Baku in 1937

The family moved to Baku in Azerbaijan to live with Dietrich's nephew, Alexander Thiessen. Here Dietrich was accused of being a fascist spy, was arrested on 1 September 1937, then shot on 16 September 1937. It should be noted that the case was re-examined on 23 August 1960, and Dietrich was declared "rehabilitated." This usually meant that he had been convicted on false evidence and had actually been innocent. Sometime in 1939 or 1940 son Hermann was arrested and shot. On 9 October 1941 the remaining family members, Julie, Konstantin, Elsa and families received deportation orders for Siberia, and were given 48 hours to pack. In the meantime Victor, art student in Leningrad, was arrested and executed.

Julie and daughter Elsa were sent to a labour camp in the Novosibirsk region, from 1941 to 1944 or 1945 being shuttled back and forth from camp to camp. After an extended illness Julie died in a labour camp near Novosibirsk, exact date not known, but about 1945.

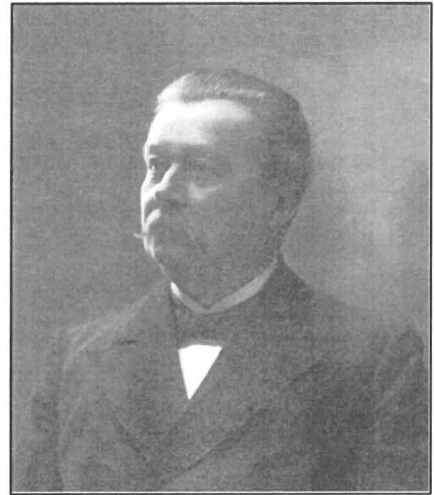
Finally, on 6 April 1996, Elsa, her daughter Olga and granddaughter Milla were able to migrate to Germany, where they currently reside (as of February 2007). It should be noted that about 1989 the remaining three members of Dietrich Thiessen's family resumed the surname Tissen, using the Russian spelling. Elsa's full name therefore is now Elsa Schulein Bereznoi Tissen.

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JOHANN HEINRICH TOEWS
(1841-1915)

Johann Heinrich Toews was born in Einlage, Chortitza Colony on 24 December 1841. He was the eldest of five children of Heinrich Toews and Margaretha Loewen. Brother Jakob was born in 1845, also in Einlage. He married Margaretha Heese in 1868; the couple had 8 children. Sister Katharina was born in 1854 in Einlage. She married Wilhelm Penner; the couple had five children. Nothing is known of the other two children of Heinrich and Margaretha. They originally lived in Ekaterinoslav in 1836-1837, but then moved to Einlage. Here Heinrich owned a windmill, then a treadmill. In 1857 it is recorded that Heinrich with wife and five children returned to Ekaterinoslav, where he built a treadmill in 1857, then a steam-powered mill in 1867.



Johann Heinrich Toews
(1841-1915)

Son Johann therefore would have received his elementary education in Einlage, and his secondary schooling in Chortitza. He had his own children baptized at the Chortitza Mennonite Church, so presumably he will have himself been baptized there before he married. Johann married Susanna Neufeld on 23 July 1863. She was born on 20 January 1845. The couple had 8 children:

1. Heinrich - born 16 April 1865, married Agatha J Lehn 31 August 1896

Agatha was born in 1869, her father was "Odessa" Jacob Lehn

Children:

1. Johann - born 1897, member of the White Army, executed by the Reds
25 August 1920
2. Jacob - born 1898, married Elisabeth Friesen, he died in Canada
3. Nikolai - born 1901, died in Novosibirsk in 1960
4. Eugene - born 1905, died in Canada 1985

Looked after his father's business, and eventually took over his holdings

Heinrich died 9 January 1934, Agatha died in 1965 in Canada

2. Susanna - born 15 February 1867, died 10 December 1867
3. Johann - born 24 February 1869, started a soap factory in Ekaterinoslav largely
financed by his father, produced a good soap, but had difficulty with competition, so
he moved to Taganrog and started a new factory there. His ultimate fate is not
known
4. Margaretha - born 17 September 1871, baptized 25 May 1892 in Chortitza, Chortitza
Colony, never married, helped manage the Toews household
5. Jakob - born 31 December 1873, baptized 22 May 1895 in Chortitza, Chortitza
Colony
6. Susanna - born 8 April 1876, baptized 22 May 1895 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony,
married Abram J Dyck 10 June 1900, Susanna died 4 October 1914 in
Zaporozhye

7. Katharina - born 25 July 1878, baptized 2 June 1897 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony, married Peter Heinrich Heese 26 June 1901, died 1951
8. Wilhelm - born 25 February 1883, baptized 3 June 1902 in Chortitza, Chortitza Colony

Together with his brother Jakob Heinrich Toews, Johann constructed a large steam-powered flour mill in Ekaterinoslav in 1868. When Jakob built his own mill (together with his brother-in-law) in 1880, Johann became the sole owner. The early years at the mill required a lot of hard work. The mill had only a few workers, so Johann had to do much of the work himself. Wife Susanna, even though she lacked the formal training, did the bookkeeping. Son Heinrich Johann Toews, likely in the late 1890s, looked after his father's business, and eventually took over his holdings. Apparently after the Pogrom of October 1905 the Jewish financiers were unwilling to lend money to other businesses, so Johann closed down the mill. He sold all the machinery, and rented out the empty granaries as living quarters.



Susanna and Katharina
in 1896

Throughout his life Johann was involved with the church. While officially member of the Chortitza Mennonite Church of Chortitza, and having his children baptized there, he actively participated in the local Mennonite church. He was described as a "humble Christian, always willing to help whenever the need arose, often benefactor to the poor.' The Toews home became popular for youth activities. An example of his generosity was his providing funds for Jakob Aron Rempel to attend *Predigerschule* in Switzerland 1906-1912. Rempel subsequently became a well respected teacher and elder.

Johann was described as a quiet man, who loved to go for walks through the city, sometimes accompanied by his grandchildren. He was loved even though he did not answer all the questions the curious youngsters asked him.



Johann Heinrich Toews house in 2004

The building is still in use and has been recently restored. The main floor now has shops, offices occupy the second floor and the Israeli Consulate and Cultural Centre are on the third floor.

According to a reference book *Ves Ekaterinoslav* published in 1913, Johann likely had at

least four house properties, at Krestovaya 2, Pushkinsky 61, Prospekt 124, Shirokaia 1, as well as a mill at Krestovaya 2. It was said that in time Johann owned an entire block of houses. Being a property owner, Johann could participate in politics. He was a city council member for a number of years.



Susanna Toews (nee Neufeld)
(1845-1912)

Susanna was described as “a real city lady.” The Toews apartment was decorated with the finest things - floor to ceiling mirrors on the walls, parquet flooring. The soft silk-covered furniture was placed together on carpets. “Between the big room and the dining room was a cozy little salon. Heavy velvet curtains separated the big room from the salon. It was decorated with figures on either side.” There was a piano as well as a small balcony; there were pots with palms and other plants. Susanna had her own bedroom with a boudoir, and was furnished with two beds and a silk sofa. The apartment was the frequent site of big gatherings and parties; it was said she really knew how to entertain.

Money seems to have been no object in the Toews household. Susanna brought back many fine toys as presents for grandchildren when she travelled to Germany.

Wife Susanna developed cancer of the cheek, and had surgery in Berlin some time in 1911. When she returned from the hospital the cheek looked virtually normal. It did not take

long, however, until the tumour recurred. A year after the initial operation another attempt at cure was not successful. Susanna died 7 October 1912 at 11:00 PM. The funeral was held on Thursday, 11 October in Ekaterinoslav. After the funeral a long procession followed the hearse with the coffin, as it wound its way along the main street. It started to snow. The coffin was placed into the Toews family burial vault. An announcement of her death was carried in bold letters on the front page of *Der Botschafter*.

Johann went Germany with his daughter Margaretha on a vacation in 1914. Then World War I broke out and the borders were closed, so they had to stay in Germany and were not able to communicate with the family. Eventually they made arrangements to travel through Sweden and Finland, finally arriving in St Petersburg. There they ran out of money. They stayed in the train station where they met a businessman with whom Johann had previously done business. He loaned them money so that they could get home. They obtained a room in a hotel for the night, planning to take the train home the next day. During the night, on 12 August 1915, Johann Heinrich Toews died of a heart attack.

Margaretha, understandably upset, telegraphed her brothers, who immediately



Notice of death of Susanna Toews on the front page of *Der Botschafter* 9 October 1912

came to St Peterburg by train. They had Johann's body placed in a zinc coffin, then transported it home. At his funeral the coffin was not opened, but Johann's peaceful face could be seen through a small glass window. His body was also placed in the Toews family burial vault. During the Revolution the family had the vault bricked up to prevent bandits from robbing the graves.

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Chapter III

KHARKOV (KHARKIV)

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HISTORY OF KHARKOV (KHARKIV)

The region where the city of Kharkov now stands has been occupied since the second millennium B C. There were bronze age settlements, Scythian burials (6-3 centuries BC); relics of the Sarmathian and Cherniakhiv times (second to fifth centuries AD) have been found. From the twelfth to the seventeenth century AD the territory around Kharkov was controlled by the Cumans, and then the Tatars. From the early seventeenth century on, the territory basically belonged to Muscovy.

It is generally accepted that Kharkov was founded about 1654 when the Cossacks built a fortified settlement, surrounded by the Kharkov and Lopan rivers. This fortress, completed in 1659, acted as a border guard post of Cossacks defending the southern border of Moscow.



St Demetrius Church



Kharkov Oblast
Coat of Arms

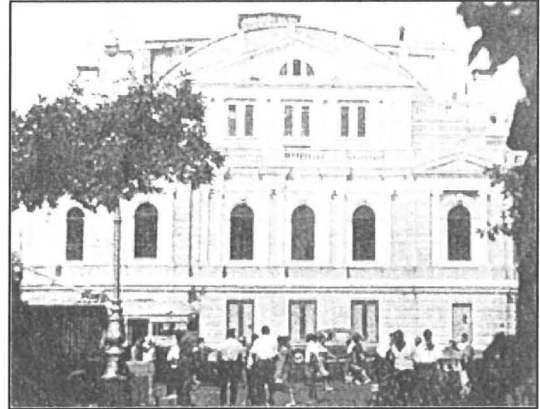
For the remainder of the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century Kharkov was a home for merchants and artisans, and remained a defensive outpost with a Russian garrison. In 1660-62 a new citadel was constructed with administrative buildings as well as some churches. By 1724 the town had 61 streets and 1,300 courtyards. While changing in character from a military outpost to a trading centre, the Tatars still attacked the fortress 12 times between 1672 and 1738. In 1732 Kharkov became the seat of the provincial government.

Much of Kharkov was destroyed by a fire in 1733, and many people died of plague in 1738 and 1741. Despite these setbacks the town revived and grew. It was situated in an economically advantageous region; this also helped its cultural development. Periodic fairs attracted an increasing number of merchants even from beyond the borders of Russia. Kharkov College was founded in 1734, and until Kharkov University was established in 1805, it was the leading educational institution in Slobidska Ukraine. In 1789 two public schools were also begun. "Slobidska Ukraine" is a historical-geographic region of north eastern Ukraine corresponding to the area occupied by a number of Cossack regiments. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Ukrainians colonized this region.

Kharkov was the capital of the Slobidska Ukraine province from 1765-1780, then of the Kharkov vicegerency 1780-1796, and eventually of the Kharkov Gubernia (province) 1835-1925. Being a regional centre the city administration was subject to various governors and vicegerents, so Kharkov was developed according to imperial standards - new government, commercial and private stone buildings were erected.

Starting with the University and its associated publishing, Kharkov became an important educational and cultural centre. In the nineteenth century four boys' *Gymnasias*, six secondary

schools, a *Realschule* as well as a considerable number of technical schools were founded. From 1810 onward Kharkov increasingly became a centre of Ukrainian culture. This was expressed in works of art and literature. A professional theatre group was established in 1789, and in 1842 a theatre building was opened, often hosting unique Ukrainian dramas.



Drama theatre in Kharkov

None of the three rivers, Kharkov, Lopan or Udy around which the Kharkov is built are navigable, but the city still flourished on the basis of the rich fertile soils of the region. With the development of railways in Russia Kharkov became, next to Moscow and St Petersburg, a most important rail centre. Eight trunk lines converged on the city, and it had three main-line stations. In 1869 its position was further enhanced by a rail connection to the adjacent Donetsk Basin with its coalfields and steel industry. The city also developed its own industry, especially related to engineering and communications. While not Mennonite, a number of businesses obviously targeted the Mennonite market by advertising in Mennonite periodicals. Among these were Anton Erlanger & Co (mill builders), Drabow & Nabholz (mill builders), J W Allsop (agricultural and technical equipment) and M

Helfferrich-Sadat (mills and agricultural equipment). A homeopathic apothecary offered to send out an instruction booklet and a price list.



Downtown Kharkov in the 1890s

As early as the 1860s Kharkov was a centre of Ukrainian nationalism. The "Revolutionary Ukrainian Party" was established at a student meeting in 1900. "Porada," the Ukrainian-language newspaper for peasants was published in Kharkov. After the February

1917 Revolution Kharkov for a time was under the influence of the Central Ukrainian Rada, but eventually the Russian Bolsheviks captured the city on 3 January 1919. Control was regained by the Voluntary White Army of Denikin on 25 June, then again fell to the Soviets 11 December 1919 - to remain under Russian Communist control. Kharkov became the capital of the Soviet Ukraine, meaning that the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, the Council of People's Commissars and the central offices of various commissariats, trade unions, "republican" organizations and periodicals were located there. Kharkov lost this important governmental position to Kiev in 1934.

Kharkov city never drew a large Mennonite population, although the surrounding fertile steppes did. Naumenko Colony, established in 1889, consisted of many Mennonite Brethren,

especially from Einlage of the Chortitza Colony. This colony included the city of Barvenkovo, where Mennonites owned large flour mills, and even had a school and a church building. Another group, centred around Samoilovka, was near Bachmetyevka, coming mostly from the Molotschna in 1888.

Some Mennonites actually lived in the city, Kharkov, itself. N H Hildebrandt was “instructor of German in the high school of Kharkov”(1898-1918). This may well have been one of the *Gymnasia* or the *Realschule*. All of his children were well educated, his daughter Katharina (Kaethe) became a physician. Hildebrandt’s son-in-law, J L Festa, was a tutor of many Mennonite teachers. This implies that Mennonites took teacher training education in Kharkov. Kornelius Jakob Martens trained as a machinist first in New York, Ignatyev Colony, then moved on to a good position at the M Helfferich-Sadet Company of Kharkov, which manufactured farm implements. While in Kharkov he attended night classes at a technical school, probably the “Kharkov Alexander III Practical Technological Institute,” the only higher technical school in South Russia at the time. He married Maria Dyck of Millerovo in 1902 and lived in Kharkov for a time, then with his newborn daughter Maria, moved from Kharkov to Millerovo in 1904. He had in the meantime been involved in the founding of a Russian Baptist church in Kharkov. Johann Salomon Ediger practiced homeopathy in Kharkov until 1917.

The University of Kharkov attracted a fair number of Mennonite students. There were at least six students who had taken their medical training in Kharkov - Wilhelm Dirks, Franz Dyck, Peter Dyck, Heinrich Warkentin, Elisabeth Isaak and J Dick. Others also graduated from the law, engineering and teaching faculties. At least four young ladies attended college in Kharkov, leaving in 1918 for the relative safety of Berdyansk to continue their studies.

There were also some Mennonite business establishments in Kharkov. Braun and Epp, Mennonites who apparently had migrated from Tiegenhof, Danzig region, had an agency for Mercedes cars, but were also Russian and Siberian distributors for Daimler motors. Before 1912 they were joined by Mr Albrecht. O F Schmidt and Company were agents for Otto-Deutzer motors. Both firms advertised through the Halbstadt published *Friedensstimme* and the *Christlicher Familienkalender*.

After World War I, and with the eventual Communist takeover, B B Janz and A Dick resided in Kharkov for some time, intermittently from 1922 to 1924. They represented the Mennonites in various capacities, especially through the *Verband Buerger hollaendischer Herkunft*. The Ukrainian governmental offices that Janz applied to were in Kharkov, making it necessary to spend considerable time there, but he also travelled back and forth to Moscow by train to deal with the central government. His basic policy was to speak only to the top echelon of bureaucrats, and with as many departments as possible! When, to a fair extent through the determined work of Janz, thousands of Mennonites could migrate, the trains on the way to Moscow went through Kharkov.



Railway station in Kharkov

Despite the presence of Mennonites in Kharkov, they did not organize a congregation. Some attended a Lutheran church, others chose to worship with the Baptists.

During the 1920s the Ukrainianization of Kharkov was considerable, but in the 1930s this policy was abandoned. With the Stalinist suppression of Ukrainian institutions and culture, with the man-made holocaust-famine of 1932-33, and the intensified Russification, Kharkov lost much of its Ukrainian character. The capital of Ukraine was transferred to Kiev in 1934.

Kharkov sustained extensive damage during the fighting of World War II. As the invading German armies advanced toward the city many of the factories and institutions were dismantled and evacuated further east, as well as over 400,000 inhabitants. Thousands of NKVD prisoners were executed, and much of the infrastructure, such as railway tracks and power stations were dynamited. The city was occupied by the German Army on 25 October 1941. With offensive action and counter-offensives there were eventually four battles in and around Kharkov. The "Second Battle of Kharkov" began as a Soviet offensive 12 May 1942 and ended in a German victory 28 May 1942. The German Army of 300,000 men lost 20,000 killed, wounded or captured while the Soviets with 640,000 men lost 207,057 killed, wounded or captured. The Soviets also lost 652 tanks, 1,646 guns, 3,278 mortars and 57,626 horses. The German general Friedrich Paulus then led



German occupation of Kharkov. 400,000 people and much industry had been evacuated eastward



T 34 Soviet tank with its crew. Many of these tanks were built in Kharkov

his army on to Stalingrad. During the 22-month German occupation of Kharkov thousands of inhabitants died of hunger, disease, cold and execution. The Soviets regained permanent control of Kharkov 23 August 1943, with the population of the city between 160,000 and 192,000. The Soviet police squads then proceeded to continue executions, eliminating real or suspected German collaborators as well as Ukrainian nationalists. With the various battles in the region about 70% of Kharkov had been destroyed.

Reconstruction of the city began almost immediately. Housing was constructed to keep pace with the burgeoning population. Industrial enterprises returned. Some of the factories which specialized in producing T 34 tanks turned to building tractors. Streets and tramways were built,

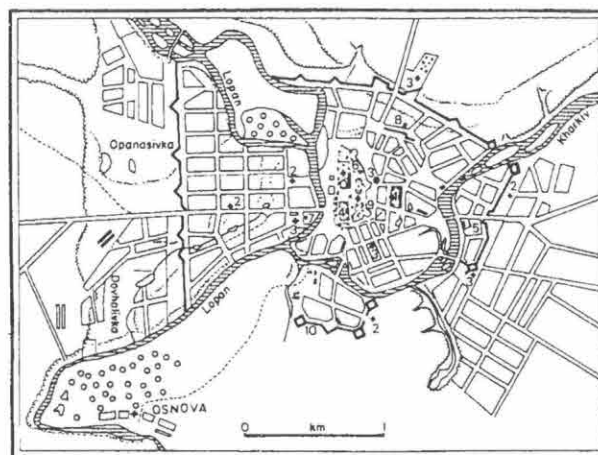


Tractor factory in Kharkov

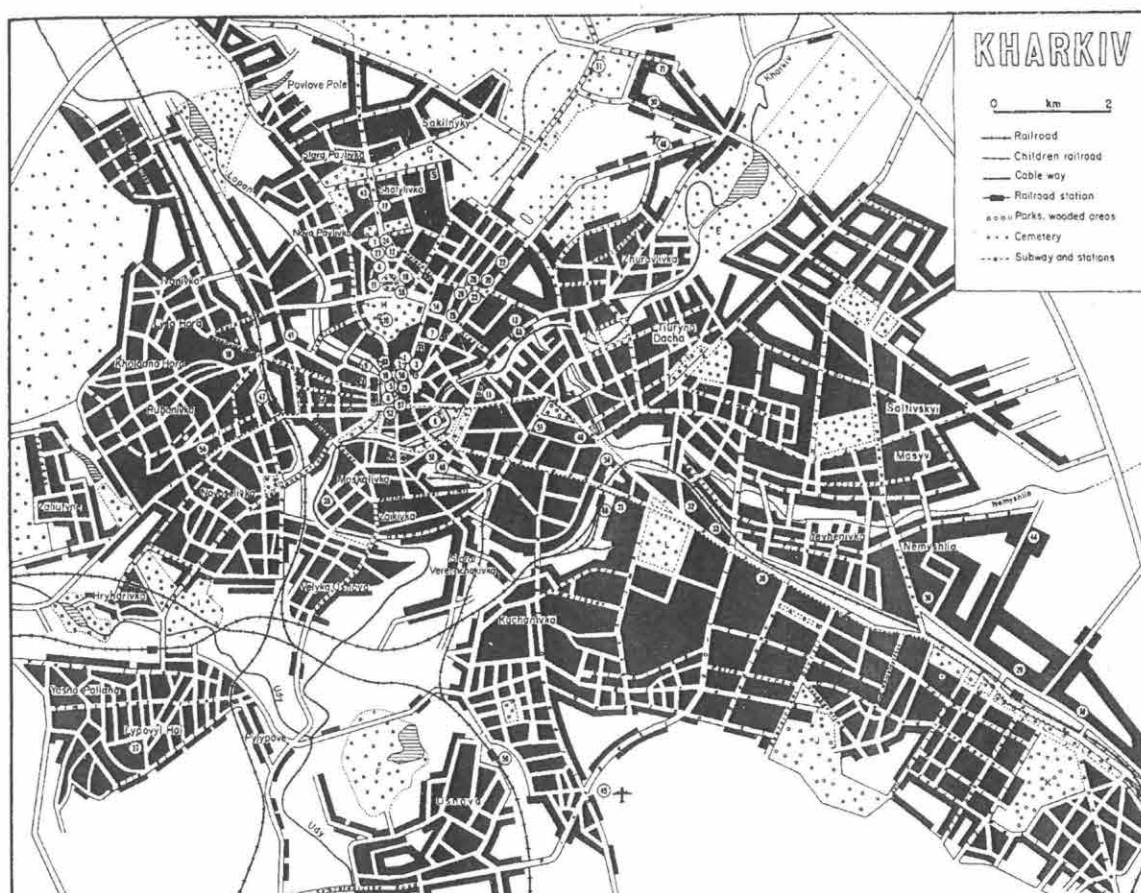
and eventually even a new underground rapid-transit system with 35 kilometres of track and 28 stations. Kharkov's role as a transportation hub has continued, and it is second only to Kiev as an educational, scientific and cultural centre in Ukraine. Remaining monuments of the distant past are the Prokovsky Cathedral, the Patriarchal Cathedral and the Bell Tower commemorating the victory over Napoleon I in 1812.

The population of Kharkov has grown steadily, in 2006 being estimated at 1,461,300. Area is 300 square kilometres, and the elevation is 152 metres. It is the capital of Kharkov Oblast and of the Kharkov City Municipality. It is located at 49° 54 60 N, 36° 18 60 E, and is on the northeast border of Ukraine.





Kharkov in 1787



Modern map of Kharkov

LIST OF PEOPLE

(People who at one time lived in Kharkov)
(Each name will appear in **bold** print only once)

It is sometimes difficult to tell if the people lived in the city of Kharkov, or in one of the Mennonite colonies in the oblast. This list is meant to include only those who actually lived in the city. In all, 49 Mennonites were found to have lived, worked, studied in the city of Kharkov. In addition, many travelled through Kharkov as they were leaving the Soviet Union in the 1920s.

Adrian, Mr J

Student in Kharkov in 1914, probably at the university

Albrecht, Mr

Sometime after 1910, but by 1912, joined the firm of Braun & Epp, the company then being called Braun, Epp & Albrecht

This company was a distributor for Daimler Motors and Mercedes Automobiles

They advertised in the *Christlicher Familienkalender* in 1912

Bergmann, Abram Hermann

Born 1879, the fourth of 11 children

Parents Hermann Abram Bergmann and Helena Heinrichs, owners of Bergmannsthal Estate

Secondary education in Kharkov, likely about 1892-1896

During the Civil War fled with his father and brother Julius to escape the advancing Communist forces

They were captured and executed in late January 1919

Bergmann, Heinrich Hermann

Born 1890, the tenth of 11 children

Parents Hermann Abram Bergmann and Helena Heinrichs, owners of Bergmannsthal Estate

Secondary education in Kharkov, likely about 1903-1907

Eventually banned to the far north, then later to the White Sea area of Siberia, where he presumably died

Bergmann, Hermann Hermann

Born 1874, the eldest of 11 children

Parents Hermann Abram Bergmann and Helena Heinrichs, owners of Bergmannsthal Estate

Secondary education in Kharkov, likely about 1887-1891

During the Civil War escaped to the Crimea, but was captured in Feodosiya

Executed sometime after October 1919

Bergmann, Julius Hermann

Born 1875, the second of 11 children

Parents Hermann Abram Bergmann and Helena Heinrichs, owners of Bergmannsthal Estate

Secondary education in Kharkov, likely about 1888-1892

During the Civil War fled with his father and brother Abram to escape the advancing Communist forces

They were captured and executed in late January 1919

Bock, Jakob Gerhard

Born 7 February 1883 in Schoenwiese

Parents Gerhard Bock and Helene Jakob Goerzen

Married **Justina Abraham Koop** August 1917

Studied at an Institute of Commerce in Germany

Back in Russia he worked in Alexandrovsk, at the Koop factory

6 children: Victor (1919-1920), **Georg** (1921) and Victor (1924-1924) born in Schoenwiese

Moved to Kharkov in 1924

Children **Irene** (1926-1927) and **Margaretha (Gredel)** (1926-1927) (twins) likely born in Kharkov

Ernst born 6 February 1929 in Schoenwiese, chemistry professor, died 1994 in Winnipeg, Manitoba

Jakob arrested 7 July 1937 likely in Schoensee, Justina died in Winnipeg, Manitoba, 17 April 1949

Braun, Mr

Originally from Tiegenhof, Danzig region

Together with a Mr Epp owned "Braun & Epp"

This company was the distributor for Daimler motors and Rossija agricultural machines for Russia and Siberia

They also had the agency for Mercedes cars

They advertised in *Friedensstimme* in 1910

Mr Albrecht joined the firm by 1912, then called Braun, Epp & Albrecht

Advertised in *Christlicher Familienkalendar* in 1912

Dick, A

Apparently helped B B Janz in his work for the *Verband Buerger hollaendischer Herkunft* in Kharkov from 1922 onward

Dirks, Wilhelm

From Waldheim, Molotschna

Graduated from medicine, University of Kharkov, practised in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna

Dueck, David Johann

Likely from the Molotschna

Graduate of six-year *Realschule* in Melitopol, then took final year in Kharkov

Taught mathematics at the Gnadenfeld *Zentralschule*, then in the Halbstadt *Zentralschule* 1896-1909

Dyck, Franz

From Fuerstenau, Molotschna

Graduated from medicine, University of Kharkov, practised in the Molotschna

Dyck, Johann

Graduated from medicine, University of Kharkov

Son of Jakob Dyck and Sara Reimer of the Neu Telentschi Estate in the Crimea

Married Elisabeth Fehdrau, eldest daughter of Jakob and Maria Fehdrau, probably shortly after he had finished his exams

Had a daughter Johanna, born after Johann's death

During the Civil War the White Army assigned him to Odessa to establish a centre for wounded soldiers

After a short period of service in the White Army he caught typhoid fever and died

He was called a gentleman, polite and a Christian who cared for people and was willing to help

Dyck, Katharina

Born 24 July 1896 in the Crimea

Parents Jakob Dyck and Sara Reimer, estate owners

Sister of Dr Johann Dyck, medical student in Kharkov

Studied in Kharkov likely starting in 1915, then transferred to Berdyansk in 1918, because it was safer

Married Alexander Ediger in 1918

Dyck, Peter

From Fuerstenau, Molotschna

Graduated from medicine, University of Kharkov, practised in Ohrloff, Molotschna

Ediger, Johann Salomon

Born 6 February 1882 in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna

Parents Salomon Heinrich Ediger and Anna Schmidt

Married **Agatha Dyck** 14 July 1911 in Telentschi, Crimea

She was born 9 April 1888 in Telentschi, Crimea

She was daughter of Jakob Dyck and Sara Reimer

Children:

Johann - born 1 July 1912 in Kharkov, married Eva Wiens 2 November 1938 in Berlin, Germany, 3 children born in Germany

Erika - born 22 August 1916, in Alushta, Crimea, died 24 September 1916 in Kharkov

Heinrich - born 3 March 1921 in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna, died 9 March 1921 in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna

Wife Agatha died 9 March 1921 in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna, the same day as her infant son Heinrich, most likely of complications of childbirth

Johann married again, Anna Ediger, 17 April 1922, in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna

Child:

Anna - born 7 October 1925 in Loessnitz

It is likely that Johann trained in homeopathy, possibly in Kharkov, and practised it in that city at least until 1917

The family seems to have moved back and forth a number of times, to the Crimea, Gnadenfeld and Kharkov

After 1921 the family for some time resided in Gnadenfeld

One source says they moved to Germany in 1927; son Johann lived there until at least 1945

Epp, Mr

Originally from Tiegenhof, Danzig region

Together with a Mr Braun owned "Braun & Epp"

This company was the distributor for Daimler motors and Rossija agricultural machines for Russia and Siberia

They also had the agency for Mercedes cars

They advertised in *Friedensstimme* in 1910

Mr Albrecht joined the firm by 1912, then called Braun, Epp & Albrecht

Advertised in *Christlicher Familienkalendar* in 1912

Epp, Mr J

Student in Kharkov in 1914, probably at the university

Friesen, Martha

Parents lived in Halbstadt

Good friend of Katharina Dyck (later wife of Alexander Ediger)

Attended college in Kharkov together, transferred to Berdyansk in 1918, because it was safer

Hamm, Peter A

Graduated from the Kharkov School of Commerce

In 1904 Niebuhr Bank founded by Jakob Hermann Niebuhr

Peter was one of the founding managers of this bank

He then left the bank in 1909, went to New York, where under the leadership of his father-in-law founded a new bank

Heese, Jakob

From Ekaterinoslav

Graduated in law, University of Kharkov, practiced as lawyer in Ekaterinoslav

Hildebrandt, Nikolai Heinrich

Wife, Mrs Hildebrandt

Children, a number, all of whom received a good education

Daughter **Katharina (Kaethe)** who became a physician

Daughter who married J L Testa, who tutored Mennonite teachers, presumably in Russian

Graduated from the Halbstadt *Zentralschule* and the Melitopol *Realschule*

Teacher of Russian, German, Mathematics, History and Geography

Taught Mathematics at the Halbstadt *Zentralschule* 1880-1898

For a few months taught at a Women's *Gymnasium* in Sevastopol

Then transferred to a *Realschule* in Kharkov, where he taught German, at least 1898-1918

Janz, Benjamin Benjamin

Born in Konteniusfeld, Molotschna 25 September 1877

First of seven children of Benjamin Janz and Helene Penner

Completed village school, then *Zentralschule* in Gnadenfeld

Taught village school in Yalantusch, Crimea, then tutor on an estate near Kleefeld 1900-1903, likely Juschanlee

Principal of village school in Sparrau 1903-1908, then teacher in Tiege

Joined MB Church, ordained as minister 25 September 1909, and elected as leader of the MB congregation in Tiege

Served in *Forstei* 1914-1917, then returned to Tiege as teacher and minister

At a conference held 19 February 1921 elected as chairman of *Verband der Mennoniten*

Sued-Russlands. At the suggestion of government officials the name of the organization was changed to *Verband der Buerger Hollaendischer Herkunft*

Under the banner of *VBHH* Janz worked to help young men avoid the draft, to help in the

survival of Mennonites under difficult circumstances such as the famine of 1921-1922, and as a final solution to facilitate the migration of Mennonites to Canada

To help in his work Janz actually lived in Kharkov intermittently from 1922 to 1926. He needed to deal with the head offices of the Ukrainian SSR, located in Kharkov. He also travelled frequently to Moscow to deal with the national government

Janz was apparently helped in his work in Kharkov by A Dick

His address in Kharkov was No 4 Butovsky. It is doubtful that any members of his family lived there

Eventually about 26,000 Mennonites were able to leave Russia, 22,500 in time reaching Canada. It should be pointed out that Janz was not alone in his efforts; men such as P F Froese, C F Klassen and B H Unruh also played significant roles.

In 1926 Janz had the feeling that his effectiveness as negotiator was drawing to a close, and that he was in personal danger. He said his farewells and slipped across the Russian border to Latvia on June 4. The KGB apparently called on his Kharkov address the day after he left. His wife and children, as well as his parents were also able to follow him to Canada

Janz eventually settled as a farmer in Coaldale, Alberta, but his focus continued to be the broader Mennonite endeavors. He raised funds to help liquidate the debt owed to the Canadian Pacific Railway, he was soon elected as leader of the Coaldale MB Church, he was involved in negotiations regarding military service, he ministered in Brazil and Paraguay, he was on countless conference boards and committees

Starting in 1953 Janz's health started interfering with his attendance at meetings and conferences. Gradually his condition deteriorated, and he died 16 October 1964 at 1:30 AM

His funeral was held 20 October in the Coaldale MB Church, with widespread attendance, including many conference officials and friends

Friend A A Wiens wrote, "In the darkest hours of our Mennonites in Russia, God gave us the man to rescue us, the recently departed B B Janz."

Janzen, Mr J M

Student in Kharkov in 1914, probably at the university

Klassen, Jakob J

Graduated from the Kharkov School of Commerce

In 1904 Niebuhr Bank founded by Jakob Hermann Niebuhr

Jakob was one of the founding managers of this bank

Rare talent, businessman's temperament, tireless energy

He died early, at the age of 25

Klassen, Nikolai J

Chortitza, Chortitza

Studied engineering/architecture at the University of Kharkov, worked in Alexandrovsk (Zaporozhye) and after immigration in Vancouver, British Columbia

Klassen, Sara

Good friend of Katharina Dyck of Berdyansk, attended college in Kharkov, together transferred to Berdyansk in 1918, because it was thought to be safer

Lehn, Mr

From Ekaterinoslav

Presumably in the education faculty, University of Kharkov, taught school in Barvenkovo

Letkemann, Peter Peter

Graduate of the Halbstadt *Zentralschule*, then of the Kharkov *Kommerzschule*

Graduate of the Petersburg Polytechnicum

Teaching business at the Halbstadt *Mittelschule* or *Kommerzschule* in 1910

Loewen, Nikolai Johann

Born 1910, parents Johann L Loewen and Helene Friesen

Married Anna Wiebe in Friedensfeld 1 December 1929

Nikolai worked as an assistant to a veterinarian

Went to Nikopol and Kharkov to study as a veterinarian, but because of difficult circumstances was not able to complete his studies

Worked as a veterinarian in Friedensfeld

Three children: Harry (1930), Johann (Hans) (1934) and Helena (Leni) (1937)

His family stayed in Friedensfeld during the time of his studies

Arrested September 1937, to prison in Nikopol, transferred to Dnepropetrovsk prison and shot 29 October 1937

Wife and children eventually reached Canada

Harry occupied the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg from 1978-1995

Neufeld, Peter Jakob

School teacher in Steinbach (Schmidt) Estate 1857-1866 and 1870-1871

After 1866 studied photography in Kharkov, then moved to Halbstadt where he gave private instruction and worked as a photographer

After 1871 he taught at the *Zentralschule* in Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld

Upon retiring he founded a print shop in Halbstadt which eventually became the *Raduga* publishing house

Penner, Johann (Hans)

From Ekaterinoslav

Presumably in the education faculty, University of Kharkov, was a teacher

Schmidt, O F

Name is probably Otto

Could be German or Mennonite

Likely owner of O F Schmidt & Co, with offices in Kharkov and Kiev

Address in Kharkov: Gontscharovskaya Nr 24; telephone "Otto"

Agent for Otto-Deutzer motors and generators

Advertised as having the "Best display, shortest time to delivery of goods, lowest prices"
"Whether farmer or rich owner! For all the same Price!"

New price list Nr 301 available upon request

Advertised in *Friedensstimme* on 14 July 1910

Schroeder, Peter Peter

Member of the Russian Duma

Born 3 December 1886 in Melitopol, Taurida

Parents estate owners Peter Heinrich Schroeder and Maria Klassen
 Spent youth on the estate at Taschtschenak; attended *Realschule* and *Kommerzschule* in Melitopol
 Further education in Kharkov, likely university in the field of economics, about 1904-1908
 Established residence on the Crimean holdings of his father, supervised, then owned a part of them
 Elected to the Fourth National Duma in 1912
 Travelled a lot, spent considerable time in St Petersburg, even renting an apartment there
 There is no record of Peter having made speeches to the assembly, but he did work on various commissions
 Died, unmarried, 6 June 1942 in Chortitza

Testa, Mr J L (could be Festa according to ME)
 Student in Kharkov in 1914, probably at the university

Thiessen, Franz Cornelius
 Had completed *Dorfschule* in Rueckenau, *Zentralschule* in Ohrloff, and teacher training in Halbstadt
 Additional musical training in Sevastopol, lived in the household of PM Friesen
 Completed exams for a teaching certificate in Theodosia, Crimea
 Special course in teacher training in Kharkov about 1905
 Went on to a career of teaching and music in Russia and Canada

Voth, Mr W
 Student in Kharkov in 1914, probably at the university

Warkentin, Heinrich
 From Waldheim, Molotschna
 Graduated from medicine, University of Kharkov

Wichert, Mr J
 Student in Kharkov in 1914, probably at the university

Wiens, Katharina
 Born 7 March 1859 in Berdyansk
 Parents Nikolai Wiens and Margaretha Janzen
 Treated for eye condition in Melitopol, Odessa and Kharkov, as well as in Germany
 Later married Heinrich Bahnmann, then Abraham Dyck and then Elder Peter Regier

Wiens, Peter Johann
 Graduate of the Gnadenfeld *Zentralschule*, pupil of Hermann Lenzmann
 Studied mathematics at the University of Kharkov and Dorpat, where he graduated
 Probably taught a number of years at the Ekaterinoslav Mennonite school
 Taught in the Ohrloff *Zentralschule* for 3 years, then retired because of poor health
 August 1909 became director of the Halbstadt *Mittelschule* and *Kommerzschule*



Kornelius Martens and Maria Dyck
on their wedding day, 6 June 1902



Johann Ediger and Agathe Dyck
at their wedding. He was trained
in homeopathy



Agathe Ediger (nee Dyck)



B B Janz in 1896 and 1914

STUDENTS IN KHARKOV

Students at the University

Dick, Johann - from the Crimea, University of Kharkov, medicine

Dirks, Wilhelm - from Waldheim, Molotschna, University of Kharkov, medicine, practiced in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna

Dueck, David Johann - likely from Molotschna, graduate of six year *Realschule* in Melitopol, then took final year in Kharkov, then taught Mathematics at the Gnadenfeld, then at the Halbstadt *Zentalschule*

Dyck, Franz - from Fuerstenau, Molotschna, University of Kharkov, medicine, practiced in the Molotschna

Dyck, Peter - from Fuerstenau, Molotschna, University of Kharkov, medicine, practiced in Ohrloff, Molotschna

Heese, Jakob - from Ekaterinoslav, University of Kharkov, law, worked in Ekaterinoslav as a lawyer

Hildebrandt, Katharina (Kaethe) - from Kharkov, likely to University of Kharkov, medicine

Isaak, Elisabeth - University of Kharkov, medicine

Klassen, Nikolai J - from Chortitza Chortitza, University of Kharkov, engineer/architect, worked in Alexandrovsk (Zaporozhye) and after he immigrated, in Vancouver

Lehn - from Ekaterinoslav, University of Kharkov, teacher/professor, taught in Barvenkovo

Penner, Johann (Hans) - from Ekaterinoslav, University of Kharkov, teacher/professor

Schroeder, Peter Peter - from Taschtschenak and Melitopol, likely University of Kharkov in the field of commerce, about 1904-1908

Warkentin, Heinrich - from Waldheim, University of Kharkov, medicine

Wiens, Peter Johann - from Gnadenfeld *Zentralschule*, University of Kharkov, mathematics, then to University of Dorpat, teacher Ohrloff and Halbstadt *Mittelschule*

Kharkov School of Commerce

Hamm, Peter A - graduated, then was one of the initial founding managers of the Niebuhr Bank of Chortitza in 1904, in 1909 he went to New York to found another bank

Klassen, Jakob J - graduated, then one of the initial founding managers of the Niebuhr Bank of Chortitza, died young, at the age of 25

Letkemann, Peter Peter - from Halbstadt *Zentralschule*, then *Kommerzschule* in Kharkov then St Petersburg Polytechnicum, then teaching in Halbstadt

Teacher Training

Reimer, Gerhard Johann - from Wiesenfeld, 1903-1904, then taught in Danilovka, Crimea

Thiessen, Franz Cornelius - about 1905

Mennonite Students in Karkhov in 1914 (from a photograph)

(all were male)

Adrian, J, Epp, J, Janzen, J M, Teseta, J L, Voth, W, Wichert, J

Students at a College for Women

(All three left in 1918 because it was too dangerous; they transferred to Berdyansk)

Dyck, Katharina, from the Crimea; 1916-1918; later married Alexander Ediger

Friesen, Martha, from Halbstadt

Klassen, Sara

Photography Course

Neufeld, Peter Jakob, teacher, shortly after 1866

Students at a Secondary School, *Gymnasium* or *Realschule*

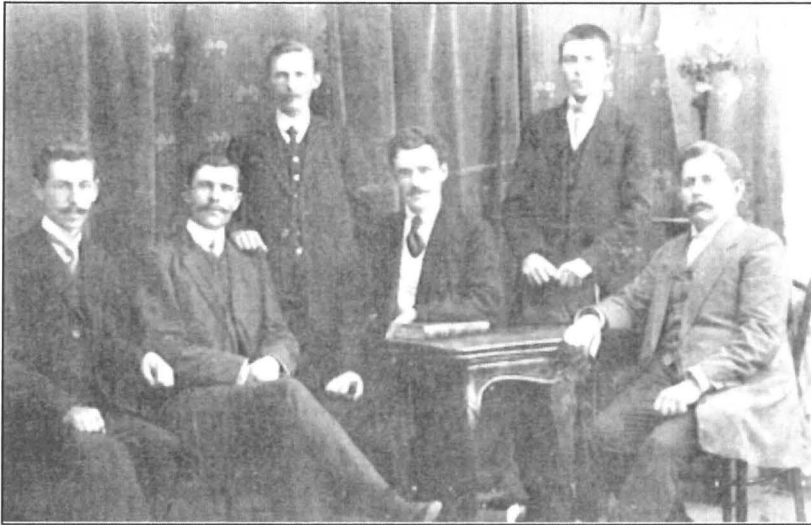
Bergmann, Hermann Hermann - secondary school, likely about 1887-1891

Bergmann, Julius Hermann - secondary school, likely about 1888-1892

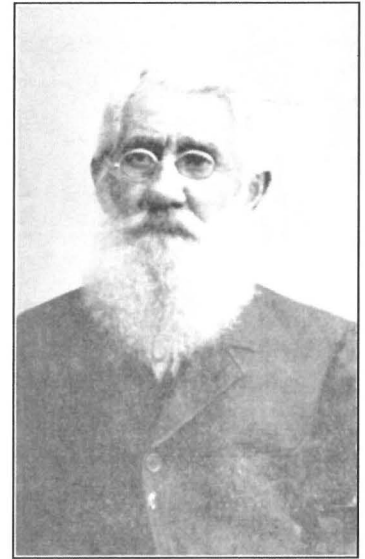
Bergmann, Abram Hermann - secondary school, likely about 1892-1896

Bergmann, Heinrich Hermann - secondary school, likely about 1903-1907

Students in Kharkov



Students in Kharkov in 1914 1 to r: J Adrian, W Voth, J Epp
J L Testa, J Wichert and J M Janzen



Peter Jakob Neufeld studied
photography in Kharkov
in 1866



Alexander and Katharina (nee Dyck)
Ediger. She was a college student in
Kharkov 1916-1918



Katharina Ediger in
Canada in 1994



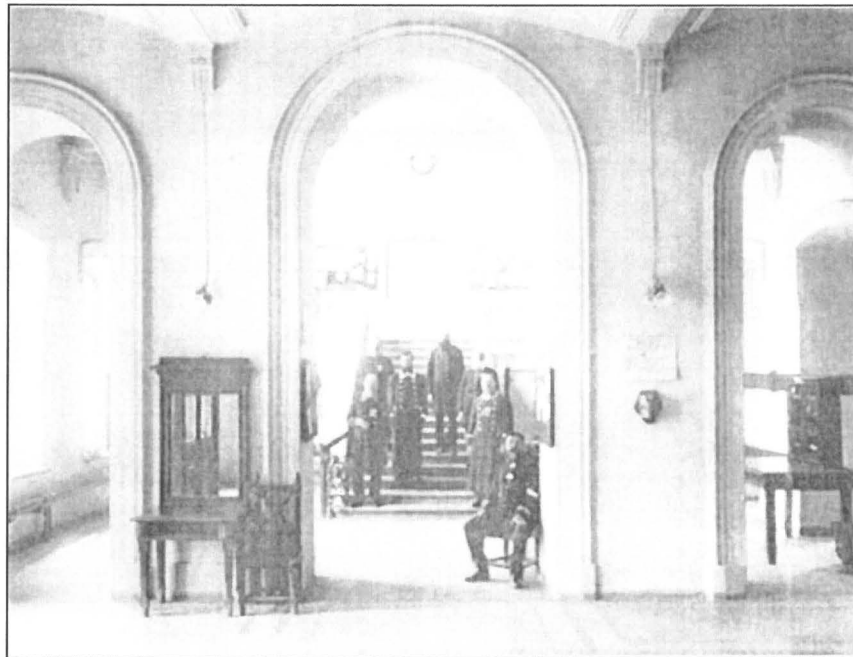
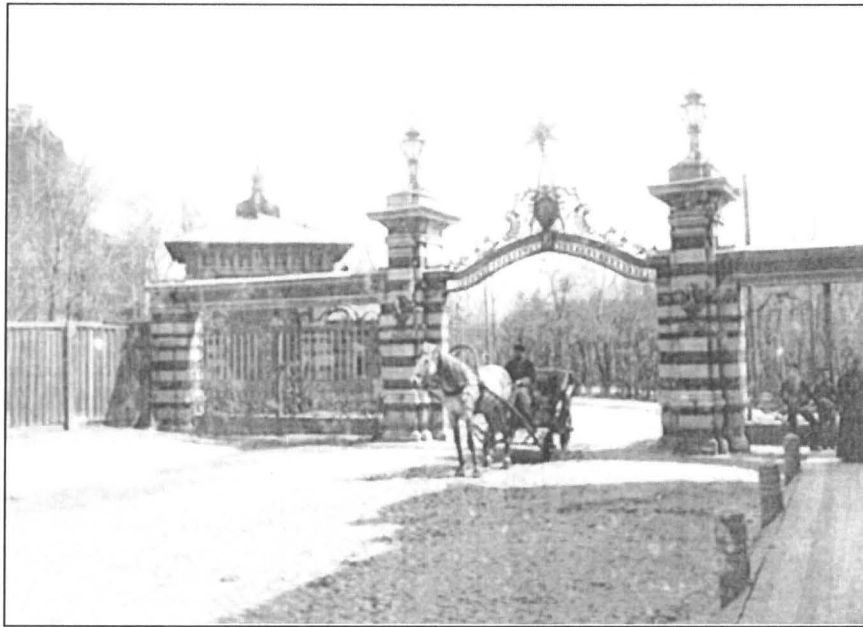
Dr Johann Dyck, seated, a
Kharkov medical graduate



University of Kharkov. This building was likely built after the time that the Mennonites studied at the University



Kharkov Medical Institute. It originated as the Faculty of Medicine (established in 1805) of the University. At least six Mennonites graduated from this faculty

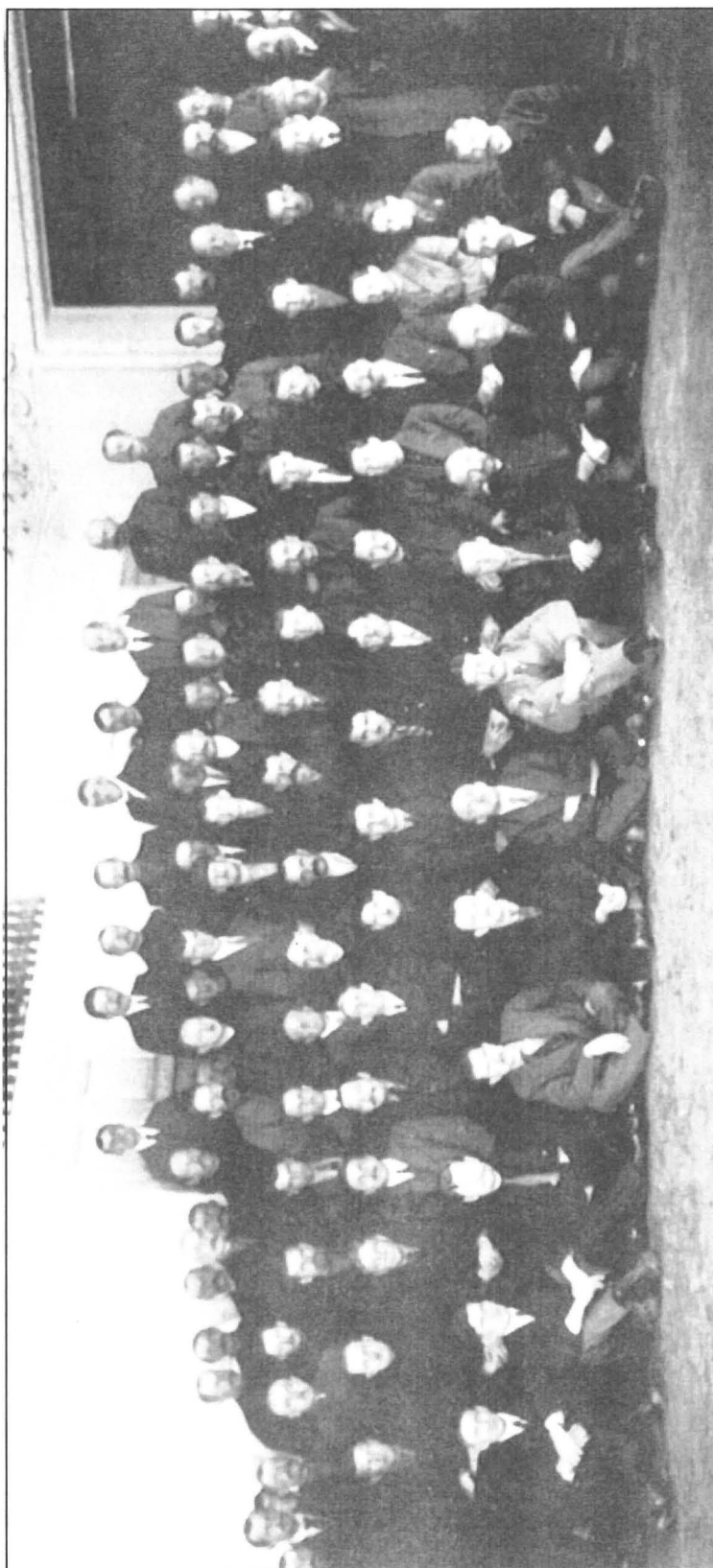


Entrance and interior of the “Kharkov Alexander III Practical Technological Institute”
It was the best technical school in South Russia at the time

MENNONITE INSTITUTIONS

Verband Buerger hollaendischer Herkunft

- Mennonite church and civil leaders met in the church in Alexanderwohl on 19 February 1921 under the chairmanship of Elder Gerhard Plett of Hierschau, for the purpose of finding some basis on which the young men could maintain their nonresistant status under the new Soviet government. They formed the *Verband der Mennoniten Sued-Russlands*
- B B Janz was elected chairman, other committee members were Dietrich Richert, H Bartel and A Fast. Much of the negotiating regarding the charter and purpose of the VBHH had to be done in the capital of Ukraine, Kharkov. Janz and a helper A Dick even moved there for a time. The word "Mennonite" had to be dropped from the original name at the insistence of Ukrainian authorities, so the name was changed to *Verband Buerger hollaendischer Herkunft*. The young Philipp Cornies was also of great help in these negotiations
- The VBHH was chartered in the spring of 1922, with the entire constitution being adopted into law in 1924. Added responsibilities were the negotiations for North American aid for southern Russia, and eventually the immigration of thousands of Mennonites to Canada. The discussions fluctuated between Kharkov and the central government in Moscow, with Janz having endless meetings and negotiations with committees and bureaucrats
- The general area of activity involved five gubernia (provinces): Ekaterinoslav, Donetsk, Kherson, Odessa and Kharkov. There were seven district offices: Chortitza, Halbstadt, Gnadenfeld, Schoenwiese, Miropol, Memrik and Tiege (Sagradovka). In this area there were 173 villages and 14,511 farms (*Wirtschaften*).
- The VBHH was able to function until 17-20 February 1926, the date of the last congress in Kharkov. Janz resigned from the leadership, and because he felt himself to be in personal danger, made immediate plans to leave the country. He left Kharkov just hours before the KGB knocked on his door
- Also at the meeting of 17-20 February 1926 a new committee was chosen: Hermann Dueck, Peter Funk and Philipp Cornies. They were sent into exile soon after, so the committee in matter of fact was liquidated by the government, even though it had full legal status. It was dissolved presumably because of its continuing leadership in emigration
- Janz, his wife and children, as well as his parents, safely reached Canada



The last congress of the *Verband Buerger hollaendischer Herkunft* in Kharkov 17-20 February 1926. Second row from the front are l to r: J I DeJager, chairman of the Sagra dovka district, Gerhard Funk, chairman of the Chortitza district, Peter F Froese, chairman of the *Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirtschaftlicher Verein*, Moscow, Philipp D Cornies, vice-chairman of VBHH, Peter I Dyck, chairman of the Ekaterinoslav district, B B Janz, chairman of VBHH, Comrade Lobanoff, chairman of the All-Ukrainian Central Commission for National Minorities, J J Thiessen, chairman of the February congress, Comrade Buzenko, secretary of the All-Ukrainian People's Executive Committee, Hermann F Dyck, second chairman of the congress, H Sawatzky, third chairman of the congress

MENNONITE BUSINESSES

Braun & Epp (1910), Braun, Epp & Albrecht (1912)

Headquarters in Kharkov, address: Rybnaya Str 30; telephone "Motor"

Also had branch in Ekaterinoslav

Originally Braun and Epp came from Tiegenhof, Danzig region

This company was the distributor for Daimler motors and Rossija agricultural machines for Russia and Siberia

They also had the agency for Mercedes cars, price beginning at 2,100R

Also sold trucks, loading capacity 400 pud

Advertised in *Friedensstimme* on 14 July 1910

By 1912 joined by a Mr Albrecht

Continued to advertise, in *Christlicher Familienkalender*, 1912

Highlighted Daimler Motors and Mercedes Automobiles

O F Schmidt & Co

Offices in Kharkov and Kiev

Address in Kharkov: Gontscharovskaya Nr 24; telephone "Otto"

Schmidt could have been German or Mennonite

Agent for Otto-Deutzer motors and generators

Advertised as having the "Best display, shortest time to delivery of goods, lowest prices"

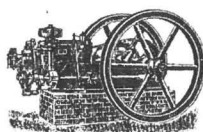
"Whether farmer or rich owner! For all the same Price!"

New price list Nr 301 available upon request

Advertised in *Friedensstimme* on 14 July 1910

~ Braun, Epp & Albrecht ~

Charkow, Rybnaja, Nr. 30. — Telegr.-Adresse: Motor.
Generalvertretung der weltberühmten „Daimler“-Motoren.



Saug-Gas-Motore
— in —
Zwillingsausführungen.

Älteste Petroleum-Motoren-Fabrik

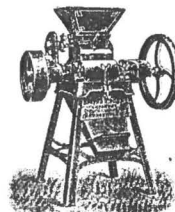
Billigster Betrieb, da denkbar geringster Brenn-
stoffverbrauch.

Unabhängig von Brunnen und Wasserleitung,
da Verdampfungsabkühlung.

Sparfamer Ölverbrauch, da mit Ringschmier-
lagern ausgerüstet.

Sofortige Betriebsfähigkeit ohne Anwärnung,
da magnet-elektrische Zündung.

Gleichmäßiger Gang, da mit Zentrifugal-regulator

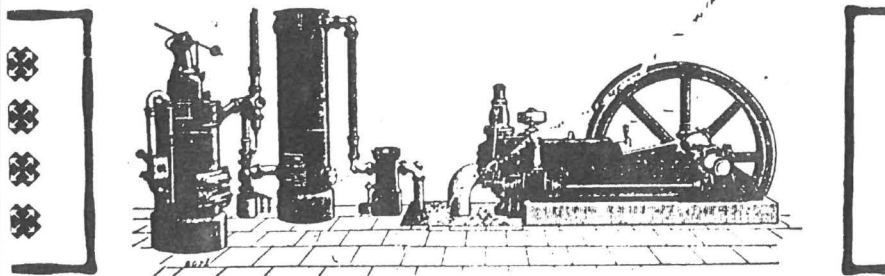


O. F. Schmidt & Co.

Charkow,
Gr. Gontscharowskaja Nr. 24.
Tel.Adr.: Otto.

Nie 40,
Nikolajewskaja Nr.
Tel.Adr.: Prosk.

== Vertreter der berühmten „Otto-Deutzer“ Motore. ==
== Fabrik für Generatorbau nach „Otto-Deutzer“ Patent. ==



Unser Geheimnis: Beste Ausführung! Kürzeste Lieferzeit! Billigste Preise!

— Ob Bauer oder Herr! Für alle die gleichen Preise! —

Reserveteile stets auf Lager. Bitte verlangen Sie die neue Preislifte Nr. 301

Advertising in *Friedensstimme* and *Christlicher Familienkalender*

ESTATES IN THE KHARKOV OBLAST

There were two major areas around which estates were clustered; altogether 27 estates have been listed for the Kharkov region.

Samoilovka Region, Bachmetyevka

Collection of estates, listed in the 1908 Forstei List:

Braun, Johann Jakob.....	176 dess
Dick, Heinrich Peter.....	227 dess
Dick, Peter Peter.....	95 dess
Enns, Hermann Hermann.....	260 dess
Epp, Heinrich Heinrich.....	573 dess
Klassen, Jakob Johann.....	150 dess
Klassen, Peter Abraham.....	100 dess
Lepp, Abraham Kornelius.....	95 dess
Lepp, Kornelius Abraham.....	137 dess
Neufeld, Jakob Hermann.....	273 dess
Neufeld, Jakob Johann.....	100 dess
Reimer, Kornelius Peter.....	229 dess
Reimer, Peter Peter.....	63 dess
Warkentin, Aron.....	72 dess

Also in the area:

Schmidt, David Jakob.....	50 dess
---------------------------	---------

Barvenkovo Region

Doerksen, Julius, Peter.....	100 dess (Maryevka)
Friesen, Peter Gerhard.....	50 dess (Nadeshdovka)
Janzen, Heinrich Heinrich	100 dess
Klassen, Johann Jakob.....	450 dess (Saparovka)
Nickel, Gerhard Heinrich.....	225 dess (Maryevka)
Nickel, Peter Heinrich.....	225 dess (Maryevka)

Other Estates

Dueck, P.....?	(Malvinovka)
Dyck, Johann Jakob.....?	near Grigorievka
Dyck, Peter.....?	near Grigorievka
Enns, Jakob Jakob.....	105 dess (Grigoryevka)
Warkentin, Dietrich G, Wall, Kornelius, Mr Penner	330 dess (Neu-Hoffnung) near Blisnetze
Wieler, Abraham.....?	

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Chapter IV

MOSCOW

MOSKVA

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HISTORY OF MOSCOW

Moscow is the capital of Russia, and is the centre of many activities, political, economic, educational, and transportation. With a population of 10.65 million it has the largest population of any city in Europe. It was the capital of Muscovite Russia and of the Soviet Union, and now of the Russian Federation. It is situated on the Moskva River, and is in the Central Federal District in the European part of Russia. The city area is 1,081 square kilometres, elevation from 130 to 253 metres. Temperatures in summer are around 22°C, dropping in winter to approximately - 12°C. It is located at about 55°N and 37°E.

The first reference to Moscow dates to AD 1147. Nine years later, in 1156, Prince Yuriy Dolgoruki of Kiev ordered the construction of a wooden wall, which had to be rebuilt a number of times because of expansion of the city borders. The Mogol-Tatars sacked the city 1237-1238, burning it to the ground and killing its inhabitants. Moscow recovered, and by 1327 was the capital of an independent principality. Under Ivan I the city became the sole collector of taxes for the Mogol-Tatars, but it was Ivan III who finally broke the Russians free of Tatar control in 1480. The seventeenth century was plagued by popular uprisings - the liberation of Moscow from the Polish-Lithuanian invaders (1612), the Salt Riot (1648), the Copper Riot (1662) and the Moscow Uprising (1682). Peter the Great founded St Petersburg in 1703 on the Gulf of Finland, and moved the capital there in 1712.

Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812. As the French forces were approaching Moscow the citizens burned the city and evacuated it on September 14. Napoleon's army, while the conqueror, was plagued by hunger, cold and poor supplies, and so it was forced to retreat.

Following the Russian Revolution of 1917, Lenin moved the capital from St Petersburg to Moscow. It became the capital of the Russian Soviet Federation Socialist Republic on 12 March 1918, then of the whole Soviet Union in 1924.

With the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 the German Army Group Centre was stopped at the outskirts of the city. Much of the population and many of the industries had been evacuated, but Stalin and the general staff remained in the city. In spite of the siege and bombing, construction of the Moscow metro, which had been begun in the 1930s, continued. The Red Army, together with at least 16 divisions of national volunteers successfully defended the city and eventually drove off the invaders.

In 1980 Moscow hosted the Summer Olympic Games, without American participation. In 1991 there was an unsuccessful coup attempt by some government members who opposed the reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev. With the USSR officially dissolved, Moscow continued to be the capital of the Russian Federation.

Moscow has never been the home of significant numbers of Mennonites, but some did live and work in the city for special reasons. Many educational institutions were located in Moscow, so a considerable number of students attended. Records show five students at the University of Moscow who became teachers/professors, and there were at least two lawyers. Moscow was the seat of the Soviet government after 1918, so a number of Mennonite agencies were located there. The AMLV, with Chairman Peter Froese and Vice-Chairman Cornelius F Klassen, for example, had an office in Moscow. The Mennonite Central Committee office and Alvin Miller were based in Moscow during the time of famine in the early 1920s. With the various Mennonite offices in the city

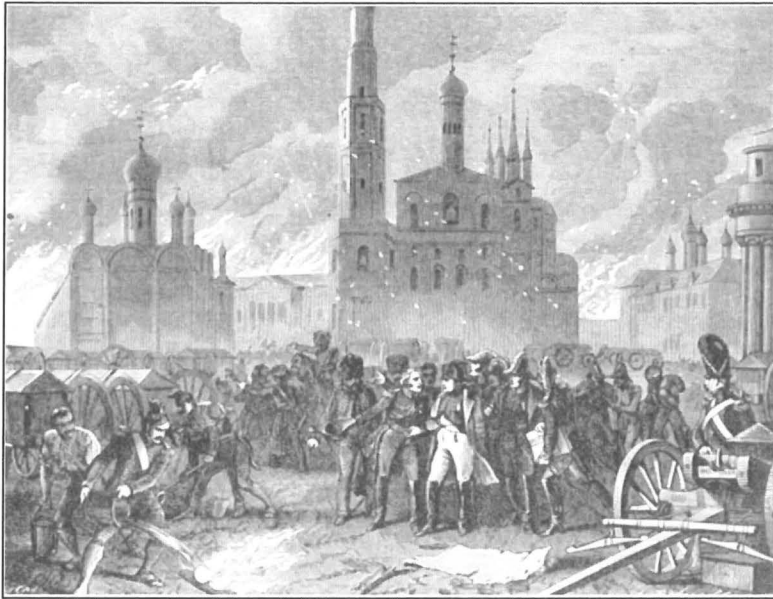
there were enough people to start a small church, which even boasted a choir. A number of Mennonite congresses were held in Moscow, for example the “Second Martyrs’ Synod” held 13-18 January 1925. Because it was a transportation hub most of the 22,500 Mennonite refugees who migrated to Canada in the 1920s travelled through Moscow. Since it was the seat of the Soviet government about 13,000 Mennonites collected in and around Moscow in a last desperate attempt to obtain exit visas in 1929. For at least 300 men it was also a place of imprisonment.

More recently Moscow has been a frequent tourist destination, to see the sights such as Red Square, the Kremlin with its many golden domes, St Basil’s Cathedral, Lenin’s Tomb, the Bolshoi Ballet or even to ride the famous Moscow Metro. Despite the splendor of some of these sites it is still hard to forget the massive Lubyanka Prison complex or the Butyrka Prison Tower, where so much agony and suffering occurred.



Gorky Street

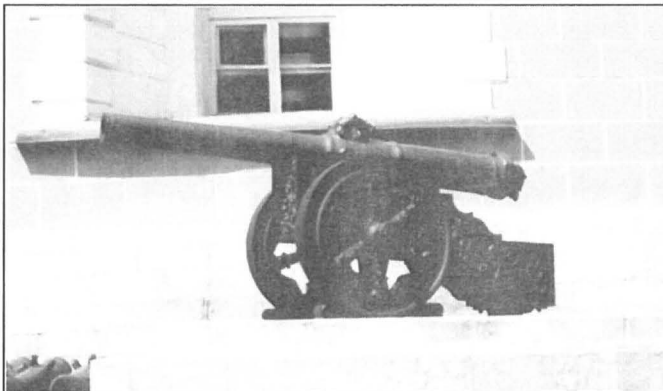
History of Moscow - Napoleonic Invasion in 1812



Napoleon watching Moscow burn

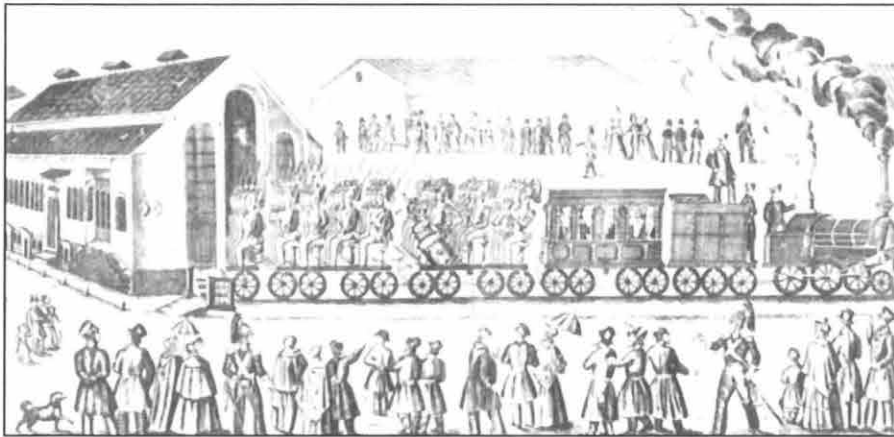


The Grand Army retreating from the Kremlin



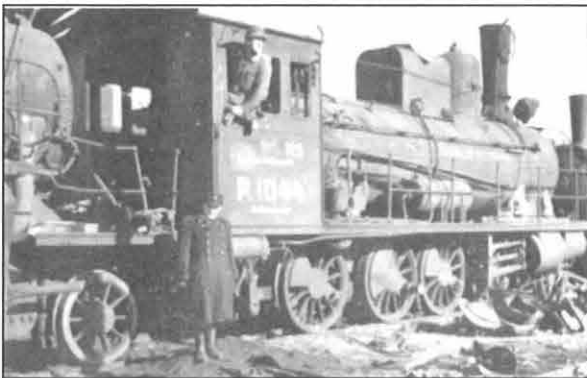
Captured French cannon displayed in the Kremlin

History of Moscow - Railways



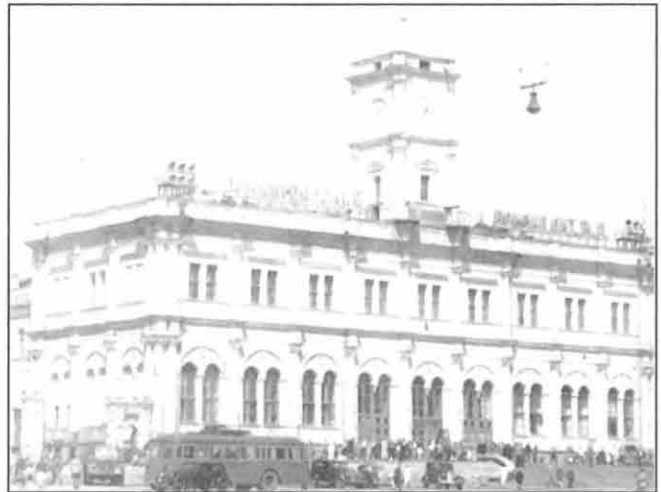
Opening of the railway between St Petersburg and Moscow in 1851

Mennonites having to deal with government agencies during Czarist times, or wishing to study at the University of St Petersburg would have travelled on this railway line



Locomotive built 1899-1902, and used on the Moscow-Kiev line

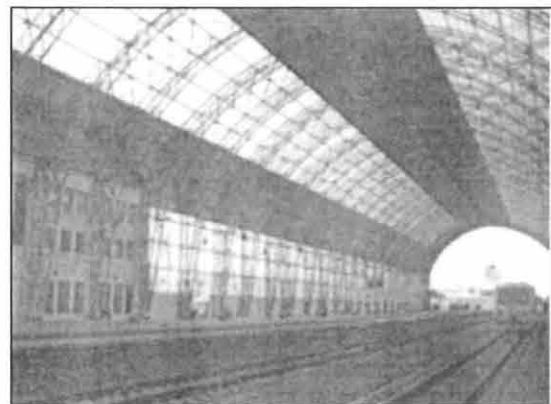
Mennonites heading north to Moscow would have travelled on this line



Moscow terminus of the St Petersburg line



Kievsky Railway Station

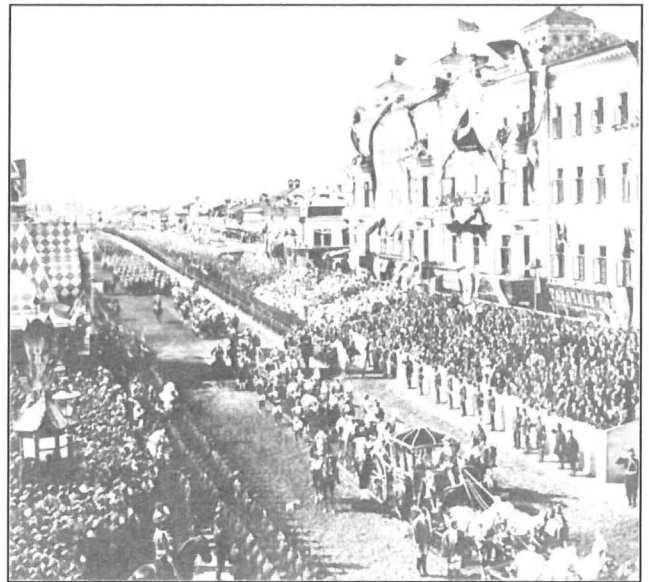


Steel and glass roof of Kievsky Railway Station

The Kievsky Railway Station was built between 1914 and 1917; it was in the Neoclassical style, with a 51-metre high clock tower. It served the south, cities such as Kiev. Many of the refugee Mennonites leaving Russia in the 1920s would have arrived in Moscow at this station



Coronation Ceremonies for Czar
Alexander III in Moscow on
10 May 1883



Czar Nicholas II's Coronation procession
14 May 1894



Parade on Red Square in 1925. Picture published
in *Moskauer Deutsche Zeitung*, November 2007

History of Moscow - the Kremlin and Red Square



Spasskaya Tower of Moscow Kremlin



Golden domes of churches in the
Kremlin



St Basil's Cathedral on Red Square



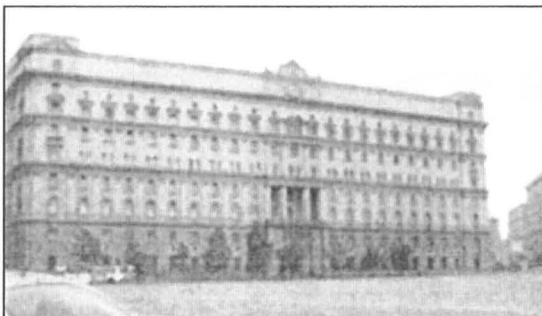
Lubyanka, KGB Headquarters and Prison

Lubyanka was originally built in 1898 as the headquarters of the All-Russia Insurance Company and was noted for its pale green walls and beautiful parquet floors

After the Bolshevik Revolution it was seized by the government as headquarters for the secret police, then called the Cheka

It was said that Lubyanka had the best view in Moscow - you could see all the way to Siberia! An even more wondrous feature was that even from the basement cells of Lubyanka you could see Magadan (far side of Siberia)

In 1929-1930, when 13,000 Mennonites gathered in Moscow, hoping to obtain exit visas, it was said that at least 300 Mennonite men were arrested, held and tortured in Lubyanka, many later being sentenced to long prison terms or into exile

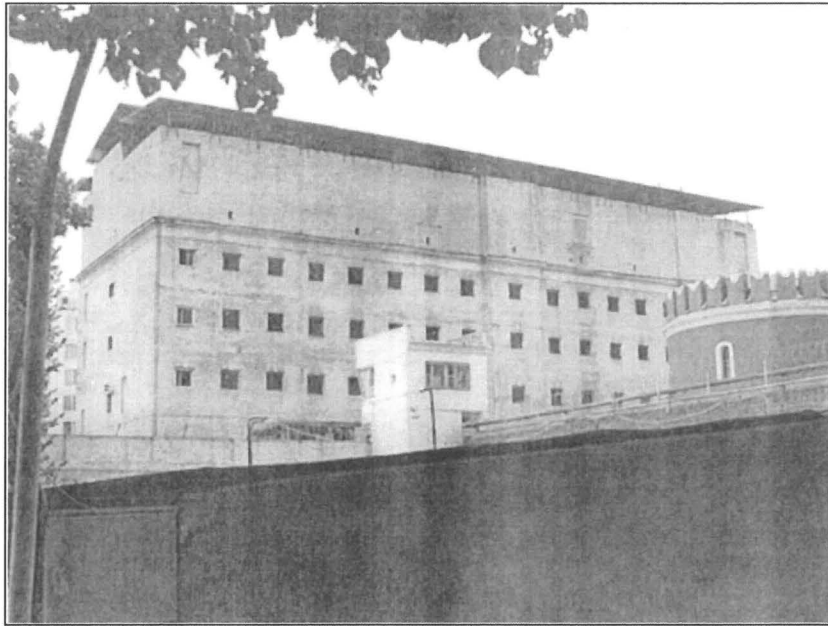


Lubyanka in 2006

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Lubyanka became the headquarters of the Border Guards, and also housed one directorate of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation

Since 1991 the Russian intelligence agencies have tried to create an impression of openness, giving guided tours

A new museum of the KGB was opened to the public, but it is doubtful that they have included their instruments of torture in the displays or recordings of the screaming victims which echoed through the halls of this building



Butyrka State Prison

Butyrka State Prison was originally built as a prison fortress by architect Matvei Kazakov during the reign of Catherine the Great. The towers of the old fortress housed rebellious prisoners from a number of uprisings

Butyrka was the central transit prison in pre-revolutionary Russia

The prison was known for its brutal regime, the administration resorting to violence every time the inmates tried to protest against anything

It is perhaps ironic that Nestor I Makhno was in Butyrka from 1910 until he was freed with a general amnesty for political prisoners which was declared in March 1917. He then went back to his home in Ukraine and started his brutal "reign of terror"

The present building was erected in 1879, continuing to incorporate some of the old structure.

The original cells are still in use. They are dark, dank, rancid and always very over-crowded.

Privacy does not exist. The cells designed to hold 20 inmates often contain up to 80

Basic conditions for health and cleanliness are not provided. People sit and sit on the same places, in three shifts. The food is terrible. There is very little daylight, and no fresh air

Recently (after 1990) there has been an attempt at international monitoring of the conditions, but little improvement has been accomplished

During the Communist era, and even today, Butyrka served as a pre-trial detention centre, but there are some inmates who have been there for at least five years

It is likely that most of the 300 Mennonite men arrested 1929-1930 spent at least some time in Butyrka. Peter Franz Froese mentions specifically that the "Tower" was used as his place for solitary confinement during his time of imprisonment

Johann Toews had eight months of torture and filthy squalor at Butyrka. Jakob Rempel was taken to the dreaded Butyrka prison where he was tortured and had many long periods of interrogation

MENNONITE MEN IMPRISONED IN LUBYANKA AND BUTYRKA PRISONS IN 1929

This list contains only those names where specific data could be found
and is obviously incomplete

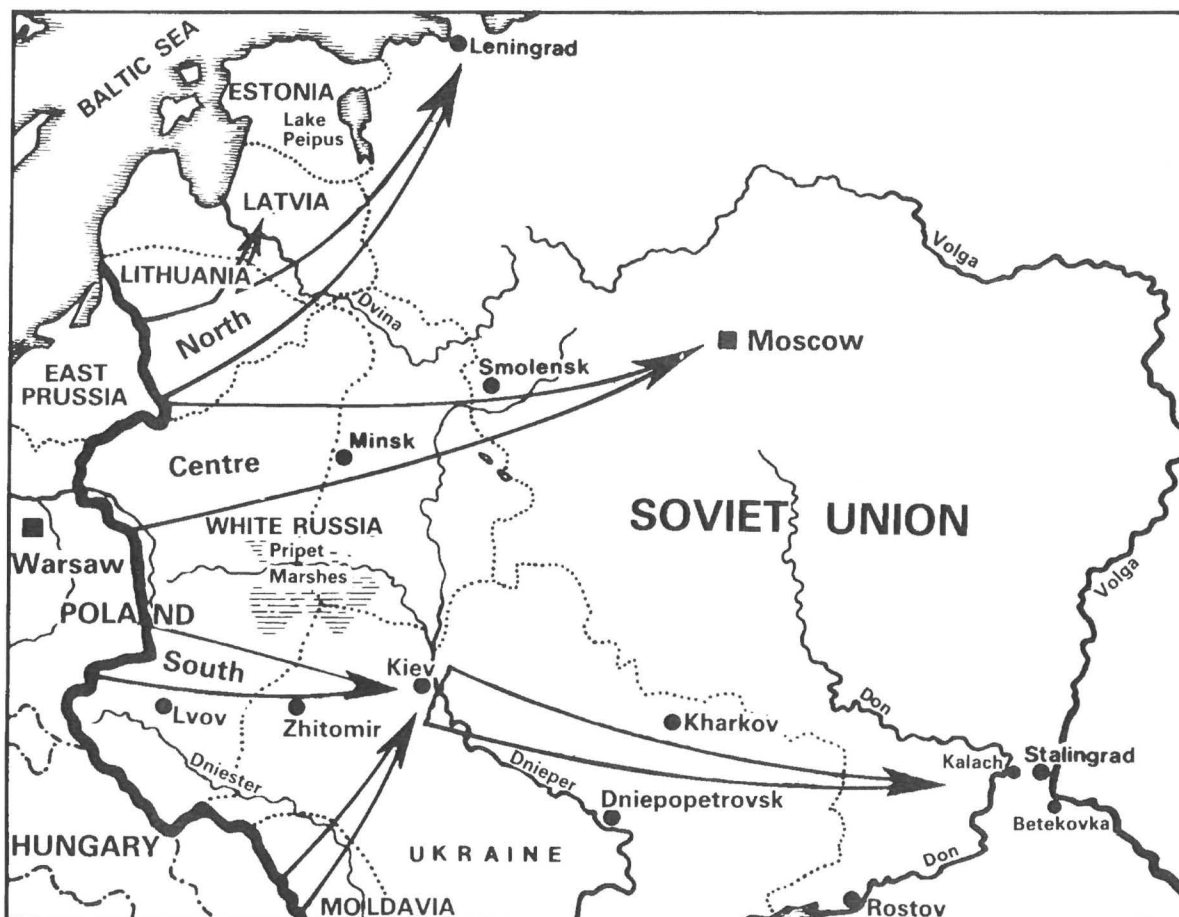
There were said to be up to 300 men in prison in Moscow at the time

First the name, then date born, date imprisoned, name of wife, and number of children

Berg, Johann Isaak, 1887, 22 November 1929, Anna, 2
Bergen, Bernhard Kornelius, 1886, 14 November 1929, Anna, 7
Bergmann, Peter Peter, 20 July 1900, 11 November 1929, Katharina, 4
Boldt, Heinrich Heinrich, 19 August 1874, 13 November 1929, Katharina, 6
Dell, Georg Georg, born 1890, 2 December 1929, Wilhelmine, 4
Dyck, Hermann Franz, arrested 16 October 1929
Enns, Abraham Franz, 7 August 1895, 19 November 1929, Margaretha, 4
Epp, Jakob Johann, 24 August 1896, 20 November 1929, daughter Susanna
Epp, Johann Gerhard, 1861, 30 November 1929, Justina, 2
Epp, Wilhelm Bernhard, 9 September 1908, 19 November 1929, father and mother
Doerksen, David, exact date of arrest not known, wife and some children
Fast, Nikolai Nikolai, 17 January 1911, 16 November 1929, parents and siblings
Fedrau, Franz Jakob, 26 June 1871, 14 November 1929, Elisabeth, 8
Franz, Heinrich Heinrich, 1886, 22 November 1929, Susanna, 2
Franz, Hermann Heinrich, 2 July 1869, 16 December 1929, 1 son
Friesen, Johann Johann, 1898, 20 November 1929, Susanna, 3
Friesen, Johann Peter, 17 June 1880, 16 November 1929, Aganetha, 6
Froese, David Kornelius, 19 February 1866, 13 November 1929, Elisabeth, 1
Froese, Peter Franz, 31 January 1892, 15 October 1929, Daria, 3 (see biography)
Funk, Peter Peter, 1895, 3 November 1929, Katharina, 3
Goertz, Jakob Franz, 26 March 1892, 16 November 1929, Anna, 5
Hiebert, Jakob Jakob, 1897, 16 November 1926, Anna, 1
Janzen, Franz Heinrich, 1910, 21 November 1929, mother and 2 sisters
Janzen, Peter Abraham, 21 August 1898, 6 November 1929, Justina, 4
Kasper, Peter Heinrich, 9 March 1875, 10 November 1929, Maria, 7
Klassen, Isaak, Johann, 1882, 15 November 1929, Margareta, 10
Konrad, Abraham Gerhard, 1895, 5 November 1929, Susanna, 3
Konradt, Peter Johann, 28 October 1884, 20 November 1929, Maria, 4
Krueger, Peter Peter, 16 May 1892, 25 November 1929, Katharina, 6
Langemann, Martin, exact dates not known, had a family
Langemann, Peter, exact dates not known, had a wife
Martens, Abraham Jakob, 10 June 1895, 20 November 1929, Elisabeth, 7
Neufeld, David David, 11 November 1891, 20 November 1929, Elisabeth, 2
Neufeld, Jakob Jakob, 5 January 1896, 19 November 1929, Helene, 3
Neufeld, Kornelius Heinrich, 1881, 12 June 1929, Katharina, 3
Neufeld, Peter Abraham, 1888, 18 November 1929, Aganetha, 1 son

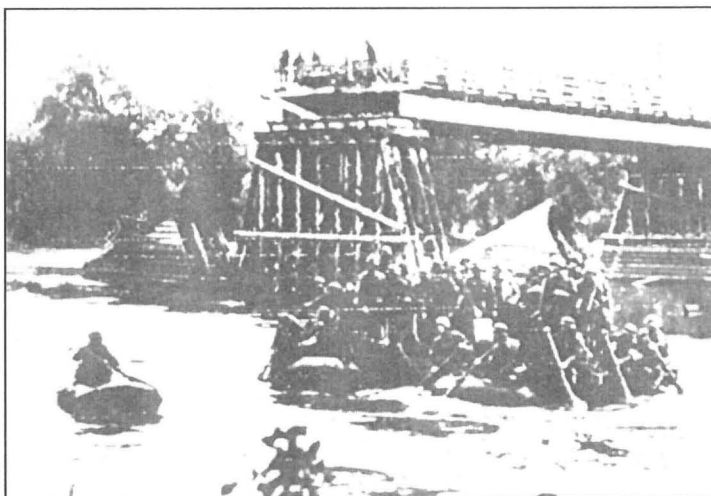
Neufeld, Peter Heinrich, 1884, 12 November 1929, Margareta, 4
 Nikel, Jakob Jakob, 2 July 1885, and son Heinrich Jakob, 2 April 1909, 21 November 1929,
 Maria, 4 more children
 Peters, Heinrich Jakob, 1878, 15 November 1929, Anna, 6
 Peters, Jakob Jakob, 1893, 10 November 1929, Maria, 3
 Pries, Jakob Wilhelm, 16 October 1876, 20 November 1929, Sara, 8
 Reimer, Aron Aron, 1898, 20 November 1929, Anna, 1 daughter
 Reimer, Cornelius Cornelius, arrested 17 October 1929
 Reimer, Heinrich Heinrich, 30 March 1899, 13 November 1929, Elisabeth (Liese)
 Rempel, Dietrich Dietrich, 11 October 1873, 21 November 1929, 3 children
 Rempel, Jakob Aron, 9 April 1883, 1 December 1929, Sophie, 7 (see biography)
 Rempel, Johann Johann, 1893, 15 November 1929, Gertruda, 5
 Schierling, Klaas Peter, 17 December 1880, 6 November 1929, Elisabeth, 1
 Thiessen, Dietrich David, 9 May 1895, 15 November 1929, Helena, 4
 Toews, Heinrich Peter, 21 January 1889, 11 November 1929, Kornelia, 1
 Toews, Johann Johann, 25 July 1877, 11 November 1929, Susanna, 3 (see biography)
 Voth, Heinrich Heinrich, 1902, 10 November 1929, mother and sister
 Unruh, Abraham Abraham, 1871, and son Friedrich Abraham, 1908, 15 November 1929,
 Susanna, 2 more children
 Warkentin, David Johann, 10 April 1896, 15 November 1929, Anna, 1
 Warkentin, Peter Johann, 10 November 1906, 15 November 1929, parents and sister
 Wiebe, Heinrich Dietrich, 1886, 2 December 1929, Maria, 3
 Wiens, Franz Franz, 1882, 15 November 1929, Anna, 3
 Wiens, Johann Julius, 1856, 18 November 1929, son David
 Willms, Heinrich Kornelius, 1878, 21 November 1929, Eva, 6

The GPU (later called KGB) seems to have had a very busy November 1929



The main thrust of the three German Army Groups. Army Group North towards Leningrad, Army Group Centre towards Moscow, Army Group South towards the Volga and Stalingrad

History of Moscow - German invasion of 1941



German invasion of Russia early morning 22 June 1941



German soldiers on the Moscow front, warming themselves after the first snowfall in 1941



Siberian reinforcements moved up to bolster sagging defenses around Moscow in late 1941



Digging anti-tank traps in Moscow autumn 1941



Parade through Red Square 24 June 1945, celebrating the triumph over Germany, four years and two days after the invasion

History of Moscow -
Defense, and final Victory
over Germany in 1945

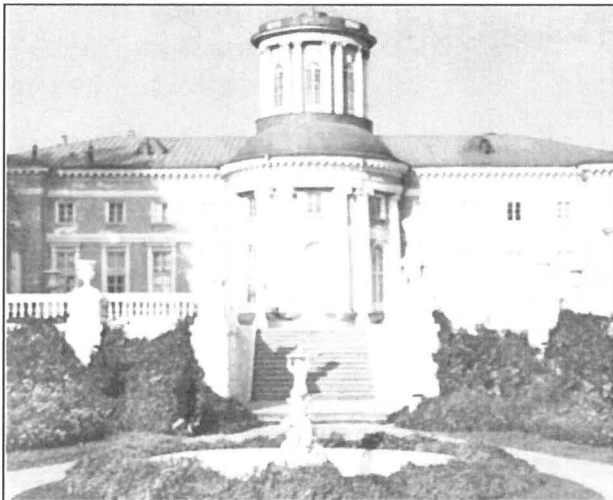
History of Moscow - Cultural Sites



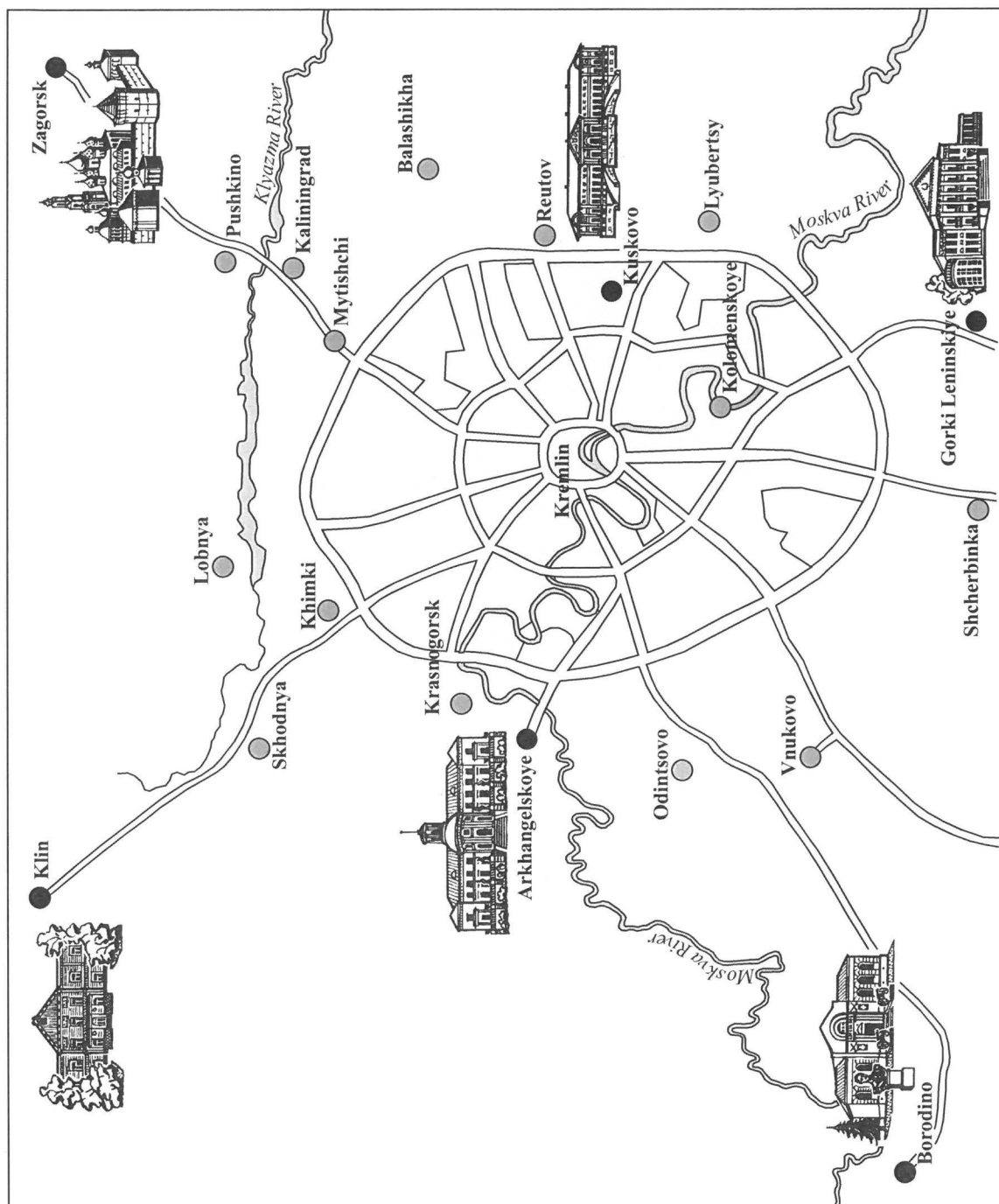
Bolshoi Theatre



Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts



Arkhangelskoye Museum



Modern-day map of Moscow and suburbs. In 1929 many of the Mennonites stayed in the northeast section, Klyazma region

LIST OF PEOPLE

(People who at one time lived in Moscow)

(Each name will appear in **bold** print only once)

The names of 1929-1930 refugees who had family members arrested and imprisoned are included in this list if their specific data is known. Their stay was often longer, sometimes much longer, than they had anticipated, and certainly was not a pleasant time. The names of delegates from across Russia who attended conferences in Moscow in 1925 are not included. A total of 403 Mennonites are mentioned in this list.

Baerg, Johann Wilhelm

Born 1871

Wife **Justina** born 1882

Son Wilhelm Johann born 23 August 1907

Kornelius born 1909

Justina born 1914

Heinrich born 1919

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Johann and likely son Wilhelm arrested 16 November 1929 and jailed; their subsequent fate is unknown

Wife Justina, Kornelius, daughter Justina, and Heinrich to Prenzlau Refugee Camp in Germany by 19 February 1929

Bartel, Mr

On the staff of, or dealing with, the AMLV office in Moscow in 1925

Berg, Johann Jakob

Born 1887

Wife **Anna Johann**

2 children

Mother-in-law

Sister-in-law

From Schoental, Crimea

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Johann was arrested 22 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Johann and family is unknown

Bergen, Bernhard Kornelius

Born 1886

Wife **Anna Nikolai**

7 children

From Kaltau, Sorotschinsk, Orenburg

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Bernhard was arrested 14 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Bernhard and family is unknown

Bergmann, Peter Peter

Born 20 July 1900

Wife **Katharina Abraham**

4 children

From Uglovoye, Slavgorod, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Peter arrested 11 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Peter and family is unknown

Boldt, Heinrich Heinrich

Born 19 August 1874

Wife **Katharina Heinrich** born 1 July 1880

6 children

From Chortitza, Slavgorod, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Address: Mamontovka, Lentotschka 3

Heinrich was arrested 13 November 1929 and jailed. Subsequent fate unknown

Katharina and 6 children in the Prenzlau Refugee Camp in Germany by 12 February 1930

Braeul, Johann Johann

Probably born and raised in Ohrloff, Molotschna

Attended the Halbstadt *Zentralschule*

With Kornelius Unruh and P M Friesen, studied in Moscow 1872-1873, then in Odessa 1873-1874

Starting in 1875 he taught Russian language, Russian history and physics in the Ohrloff *Zentralschule*

He impressed on a whole generation of students and Mennonite leaders the understanding of Russia's history and culture

Dell, Georg Georg

Born 1890

Wife **Wilhelmine G**

4 children

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Address: Klyazma

Georg arrested 2 December 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Georg and family is unknown

Doerksen, David

Minister who lived in Leonidovka (No 6), Arkadak Colony

Apparently over half of the village wanted to migrate to Canada

Presumably they all went to Moscow, and Doerksen was probably considered to be the leader

Doerksen was arrested and sent into exile to the far north, and not heard from again

His family, presumably **wife and some children**, eventually fled from Arkadak

Son **David David Doerksen** was arrested in Leonidovka in 1941, so he must have gone back

Dyck, Arnold Bernhard

Born 1889 in Hochfeld, Chortitza

Studied at Academy of Art in Moscow, also in St Petersburg, Stuttgart and Munich.

After a number of years teaching art in Nikopol he and his family migrated to Canada

He was a pioneer in Canadian Mennonite writing, both in High or Low German
Founded a literary journal and edited the *Echo Verlag* series of books on Mennonite history
“*Verloren in der Steppe*” and “*Koop enn Bua*” are among his best known writings
He died in Germany in 1970

Dyck, Hermann Franz

Teacher in the *Kommerzschule* in Halbstadt
Secretary of the executive of the AMLV, likely starting in 1923
Arrested 16 October 1929 and jailed
Met Peter Froese and Cornelius Reimer in a common cell
Eventually sentenced to five years in a concentration camp
Subsequent fate of Hermann and family is unknown

Dyck, Jakob Jakob

Born 7 December 1890
Parents Jakob Dyck and Sara Reimer, of the Neu Telentschi Estate, Crimea
Zentralschule in Crimea, then to Ilmenau Germany to study engineering
Was in the *Sanitaetsdienst* in Moscow during World War I
Married **Katharina (Tina) Fehderau** 26 August 1916
 Son Siegfried, died in infancy
Upon release from *Sanitaetsdienst* was active in the Evangelistic Tent Mission.
Were living in Moscow at least some part of 1918, but also went from village to village to preach
He and his party were seized by Makhno bandits in Eichenfeld, Yazykovo, and murdered
26 October 1919

Eitzen, Mr

Was in the Medical Corps in Moscow during World War I

Enns, Abraham Franz

Born 7 August 1895
Wife **Margaretha Jakob**
4 children
From Vodianya, Krivoy Rog Region
Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas
Abraham was arrested 19 November 1929 and jailed
Subsequent fate of Abraham and family is unknown

Enns, H H

Was in the Medical Corps in Moscow during World War I

Epp, Heinrich Heinrich

Born 9 May 1873 in Chortitza, Chortitza
Studied at the *Zentralschule* in Chortitza, then *Gymnasium* for 2 years in Ekaterinoslav
Completed degree in History and Philology at the University of Moscow in 1900
Became teacher in the Chortitza *Zentralschule*
Became principal in 1905; taught especially in the field of education
Opened a 3-year teacher training school in 1913
Reconstructed his curriculum to suit the government criteria in 1920

Given title of "Professor"

Had to withdraw from the school in 1929 when he affirmed that he believed in God

Arrested and exiled in 1937, and not heard from again

Epp, Jakob Johann

Born 24 August 1896

Daughter Susanna Jakob born 24 June 1921

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Jakob arrested 20 November 1929 and jailed; subsequent fate not known

Susanna in Prenzlau Refugee Camp in Germany by 19 February 1930

Epp, Johann Gerhard

Born 1861

Wife **Justina Daniel**

2 children

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Address: Klyazma

Johann arrested 30 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Johann and family is unknown

Epp, Peter Bernhard

Born 1 October 1887 in Steinfeld, Schlachtin Colony

Parents Bernhard Epp and Justina Kaetler

Attended local village school

Married Anna Falk on 30 September 1910; had 12 children, 5 died at early age

Peter and Anna baptized and joined MB Church 1 May 1911

Lived with parents 2½ years, then moved to village Markovka of the Barnaul Colony, Siberia

Left the village 26 February 1929, for Moscow, in a desperate attempt to obtain exit passes to leave the USSR

Was one of the leaders of a group of 28-29 families, first attempting to negotiate directly with Michael I Kalinin, member of the Politburo from 1926 on

Then were advised to deal with Comrade Smidovitch

Final deal proposed by Smidovitch was that all those Mennonites who had reached Moscow by 1 June 1929 would receive exit papers, but with the warning, "Tell your brothers that we will let no more people out."

During their 6-month stay in Moscow they lived in a summer villa

The group left Moscow 30 August 1929

The group arrived in Canada, the Epp family living with relatives in Hepburn, Saskatchewan for 6 months. In the spring of 1930 they move to Coaldale, Alberta, where they farmed until 1946

Then they bought a small farm near Chilliwack, British Columbia. In time they sold the farm and moved into Chilliwack

Peter died 31 December 1985

Children:

Bernhard - born 29 June 1911 in Steinfeld, Schlachtin

Justina - born 21 January 1913, died 6 May 1916

Peter - Born 9 February 1914 in Markovka, Barnaul, Siberia

Anna - born 20 July 1915

Heinrich - born 15 November 1917, died 28 December 1921

Margaretha - born 2 January 1919, died 28 December 1921

Jakob - born 15 August 1921, died 28 December 1921

Heinrich - born 11 April 1923

Johann - born 23 March 1925

Jakob - born 31 January 1927, died August 1929 in Moscow

David - born 26 October 1932 in Lethbridge, Alberta

Maria - born 15 January 1936 in Lethbridge, Alberta

Epp, Peter Peter

Born 30 November 1871 in Varvarovka, Ekaterinoslav

Parents Peter Epp and Helene Harms

Baptized 1891 by Elder Heinrich Epp and joined the church

Married **Margaretha Klassen** 29 June 1898

Lived in Steinfeld (not sure which colony), where he had a business, then lived in various villages of the Chortitza Colony; 1909 moved to Siberia, Gruenfeld, Barnaul Colony

Children:

Peter - born 23 April 1899, to Canada, died 12 May 1983

Girl (name not known) - married H Klassen

Helena - born 15 October 1900, to Gruenfeld with parents, married Johann Klassen in Gruenfeld, to Canada, died 6 May 1996

Aganetha (Neta) - born 26 August 1902, died 16 December 1992

Margaretha - born 20 October 1903 in Steinfeld, married Kornelius Kehler in Gruenfeld, to Canada, died 25 January 1992

David - born 24 October 1905, died 24 February 1986

Katharina - born 8 March 1908, died 31 December 1968

Anna - born 1910, died 1914

Maria - born 22 February 1913 in Gruenfeld, to Canada with parents, married Abraham Block in Hussar, Alberta, died 13 June 2001 in Rosthern, Saskatchewan

Anna - born 21 June 1914

Heinrich - born 8 August 1916

Kornelius - born 1919, died 1921

Ordained as minister in 1910

Became the representative for Mennonite churches in the region when dealing with the government

For a time director of an orphanage

After the Revolution and the difficult times he and a group decided to leave Russia

Left Siberia in 1926 and travelled to Moscow

Because he was the leader of a group of about 500 planning to leave for Canada, he his wife and 3 children were detained in Moscow for one year and three months. During this time Peter and his family had some difficult experiences to live through

Having finally received their exit papers they left Moscow 10 December 1927

They landed in St John, New Brunswick; first settled in Gull Lake, Saskatchewan
1930 with sons and other relatives bought a farm in Hussar, Alberta
Joined Rosemary Church; served as a minister
Eventually sold farm and moved to Clearbrook, British Columbia
Wife died in September 1962
Peter died shortly after an operation 22 May 1965

Epp, Wilhelm Bernhard

Born 9 September 1908
Father **Bernhard Bernhard** born 30 March 1877
Mother **Margaretha Wilhelm** born 27 March 1879
Brother **Kornelius Bernhard** born 21 December 1911
Sister **Margaretha Bernhard** born 9 April 1914
From Markovka, Slavgorod, Siberia
Family to Moscow to obtain exit visas
Address: Klyazma, Tschaikovskaya 14
Wilhelm arrested 19 November 1929 and jailed; subsequent fate unknown
Father, mother and siblings Kornelius and Margaretha to Prenzlau Refugee Camp in Germany
by 12 February 1930

Esau, Catherine

Born 3 April 1898 in Ekaterinoslav
Parents Johann Esau and Margaretha Toews
Studied agriculture at the Golitsin Women's Agricultural College in Moscow 1916-1918
Then with family to Germany, where she continued her studies
1922 to the USA with her parents, where she continued her studies
Became a botanist, taught at the University of California, published 6 books
Died 4 June 1997 in Santa Barbara, California

Ewert, Mr

Wife Mrs Ewert

Children

On the staff of, or dealing with, the AMLV office in Moscow in 1925

Fast, Nikolai Nikolai

Born 17 January 1911

Father and Mother

Siblings

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas
Nikolai arrested 16 November 1929 and jailed; subsequent fate unknown
Parents and siblings to Prenzlau Refugee Camp in Germany

Fast, Peter Peter

From Muensterberg, Molotschna
Graduate of the Ohrloff *Zentralschule* and the Halbstadt Pedagogical Institute
Dorfschule teacher for a number of years
Passed the teacher certification exams
Graduated from the Historical/Philological Faculty at the University of Moscow

Taught Russian Language at the Halbstadt *Zentralschule* 1895-1898
To the finance ministry, then taught German at a *Gymnasium* in Feodosia
After 1909 principal of the German *Realschule* in Berdyansk
In late 1911 he received a citation, Order of the Holy Anna, Third Class
Died in 1916

Fedrau, Franz Jakob

Born 26 June 1871
Wife **Elisabeth Heinrich** born 20 January 1887

8 Children

From Obus Obe, Crimea
Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas
Address Klyazma, Lomonossovskaya 14
Franz arrested 14 November 1929 and jailed; subsequent fate in unknown
Wife Elisabeth and 8 children to Prenzlau Refugee Camp in Germany by 12 February 1930

Franz, Heinrich Heinrich

Born 1886
Wife **Susanna Johann**

2 children

From Chortitza, Slavgorod, Siberia
Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas
Heinrich arrested 22 November 1929 and jailed
Subsequent fate of Heinrich and family is unknown

Franz, Hermann Heinrich

Born 2 July 1869
Son Jakob Hermann born 26 July 1913
Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas
Hermann was arrested 16 December 1929 and jailed; subsequent fate in unknown
Son Jakob to Prenzlau Refugee Camp in Germany by 19 February 1930

Friesen, Andreas

Nephew of Peter F Froese
On the staff of the AMLV office in Moscow in 1925

Friesen, Heinrich

Age 33 when listed as a refugee late 1929
Refugee on the Russian passenger ship *Felix Dzeryinsky*, which transported the refugees from Leningrad to Holtenau in late 1929
Said to be from Moscow
Going to Canada, having brothers Johann Friesen and Jakob M Friesen in Niverville, Manitoba

Friesen, Johann Johann

Born 1898
Wife **Susanna Jakob**
3 children
Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas
Address Klyazma, Lermantovskaya 24

Johann arrested 20 November 1929 and jailed
Subsequent fate of Johann and family is unknown

Friesen, Johann Peter

Born 17 June 1880

Wife **Aganetha Peter**

6 children

From Alexanderpol, Artemovsk Region

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Johann arrested 16 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Johann and family is unknown

Friesen, Peter Martin (Martinovitch)

Born 20 April 1849 in Sparrau, Molotschna

Parents Martin Jakob Friesen and Helena Klassen

He was a student of Isaak Peters in *Dorfschule* in Sparrau, student of P J Neufeld
at the Steinbach Estate

Studied in Switzerland 2-3 years, then Odessa, followed by Moscow for a year

1873 appointed teacher at the Halbstadt *Zentralschule*

Continued teaching at the *Zentralschule* in Halbstadt, being principal 1880-1886

Married Susanna Fast 1 September 1873

September 1886 to June 1888 lived in Wohldemfuerst, Kuban

1888 to March 1896 lived in Odessa

1896 to 1898 recuperated on Estate Ober-Maitschokrak of friend Peter Heese

1898 to 1911 lived in Sevastopol, lived on his "independent means"

Organized a house church, which officially existed 1904-1910

Involved on political organizations

In the meantime writing a history of the Mennonite Brethren Church, finally published by
Raduga in 1911

Involved in Inter-Mennonite organizations, was a member of the *KfK*

Died 19 October 1914 in Tiege

Froese, David Kornelius

Born 19 February 1866

Wife **Elisabeth** born 27 January 1867

Daughter **Aganetha** born 3 January 1904

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

David arrested 13 November 1929 and jailed; subsequent fate not known

Wife and daughter to Prenzlau Refugee Camp in Germany by 19 February 1930

Froese, Heinrich

From Gruenfeld

Studied at the Academy of Agriculture in Moscow

Worked in Chortitza

Froese, Peter Franz

(see biography p 278)

Born 31 January 1892

Father Franz Froese of Memrik was an MB minister

Trained as engineer in St Petersburg, did not complete studies when he was drafted as a
Sanitaeter during World War I

Soon represented the *Sanitaeter* to the government and at Mennonite conferences

Married **Daria** (Russian)

Children:

1. **Nora** - born about 1919

2. **Erwin** - born 27 December about 1921

3. **Kornelia (Nellie)** - born about 1924

Was president of the *Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirtschaftlicher Verein (AMLV)*
from its inception in 1923 until it was disbanded by government action in 1928

As such was in charge of the office commonly known as the Mennonite Centre
(*Mennobschtschestvo*).

Together with C F Klassen also helped organize distribution of help during the time of famine.
and helped in the transit of Mennonite refugees through Moscow in the mid 1920s

Was editor of the AMLV paper *Der Praktische Landwirt* during the time it was published
in Moscow, 15 May 1925 to December 1926

The Froese family had a home in Moscow, to which other people seemed to congregate

Arrested 15 October 1929 and jailed in the Lubyanka and Butryka Prisons. Eventually
sentenced to ten years in prison

Served 9½ years in prison and 2 years in concentration camp

Released in 1941. Where he lived was overrun by the German invasion forces

To Germany, lived near Stuttgart

Died 23 September 1957 of cancer

Wife and children were in touch with Peter in 1941, but fate since then in unknown

Froese, Vanya (Ivan?)

Brother of Peter Franz Froese

On the staff of the AMLV office in Moscow in 1925

Funk, Peter H

From Neuenburg, Chortitza

Studied at the University of Moscow, faculty of law

Practiced as lawyer in the city of Ekaterinoslav

Funk, Peter Peter

Born 1895

Wife **Katharina Johann**

3 children

From Klubnikovo, Pokrovskoye, Orenburg

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Peter arrested 3 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Peter and family is unknown

Giesbrecht, Gerhard George

Born 1878 in Ruekenau, Molotschna

Second wife **Cornelia Harder** was born 14 December 1899 in Sparrau, Molotschna

The family first lived in the Wernersdorf Molotschna, then via Moscow migrated to Canada in 1924

Children:

1. **Lydia** - born 14 November 1920 in Tokmak, Taurida, married William Earl Hewson, 3 children
2. **Tamara** - born 19 May 1922 in Wernersdorf
3. **Nina** - born 11 March 1924 in Moscow, likely as the family was in transit to Canada
4. George Gerhard - born 28 September 1925 in German Mills, Ontario, married, 2 children

Father Gerhard died 10 January 1926 in Kitchener, Ontario

Wife Cornelia died 24 June 1998 in Kitchener, Ontario

Goertz, Jakob Franz

Born 26 March 1892

Wife **Anna Peter**

5 children

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Address: Gogolevskaya 23

Jakob was arrested 16 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Jakob and family is unknown

Goossen, Dietrich

From Schoensee, Molotschna

Studied at the University of Moscow

Became a teacher

Heese, Peter Heinrich

Born 2 June 1852 in Ekaterinoslav

Educated in Chortitza *Zentralschule*, then *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav

Further education at the University of Moscow

1877-1878 taught in Gnadenfeld, thereafter in Ohrloff

Co-president with Johann Klatt of the *Vereinsschule* in Ohrloff

Member of Molotschna Mennonite School Board, president alternately with Klatt 1889-1896

In the cause of education an excellent promoter and counsellor

Liberal toward various causes, especially involving education

Because all of his ideas were not carried out he withdrew from the school board in 1896

In 1906 published a Russian newspaper in Ekaterinoslav

Died in 1911

Heese, Victor Jakob

Born 20 April 1897 in Ekaterinoslav

Parents Jakob Heinrich Heese and Sophie Trinkler, grandson of Heinrich Heinrich Heese II

Married Antonia Suchodolskaya in 1920

Said to be a movie star in Moscow, under the name of "Stanitzep"

Hiebert, Jakob Jakob

Born 1897

Wife **Anna Nikolai**

1 daughter

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Jakob arrested 16 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Jakob and family is unknown

Isaak, A

On the staff of, or dealing with, the AMLV office in Moscow in 1925

Isaak, Franz F

Participated in All Russian Mennonite Agricultural Union conference in Davlekanovo June 1924

On the staff of, or dealing with, the AMLV office in Moscow in 1925

Isaak, Kornelia F (probably called Nalya)

Participated in All Russian Mennonite Agricultural Union conference in Davlekanovo June 1924

Possibly the wife of Franz F Isaak

On the staff of, or dealing with the AMLV office in Moscow in 1925

Janzen, Franz Heinrich

Born 1910

Mother Janzen

2 sisters

From Slavgorod, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Franz was arrested 21 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Franz and family is unknown

Janzen, Peter Abraham

Born 21 August 1898

Wife **Justina Peter**

4 children

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Address: Klyazma, Gogolevskaya 22

Arrested 6 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Peter and family is unknown

Janzen, Mr

Was in the Medical Corps in Moscow during World War I

Kasper, Peter Heinrich

Born 9 March 1875

Wife **Maria Nikolai**

7 children

From Krasnoye 3, Balaschov, Saratov

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Peter was arrested 10 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Peter and family is unknown

Klassen, Abram Johann

From Barvenkovo

On the staff of, or dealing with the AMLV office in Moscow in 1925

Klassen, Cornelius Franz

(see biography p 286)

Born 3 August 1894 on the Franz F Klassen Estate, Neu Samara

Oldest of 13 children of Franz F Klassen and Justina Wiebe

Family moved to Donskoye, Neu Samara in 1900, where Cornelius went to the *Dorfschule Zentralschule* in Karassan, Crimea 1907-1910

Baptism into the MB Church at Lugovsk in the summer of 1911

Worked in office of Otto Deutz Co of Moscow in 1912

Studied in Education under A Tcheriyayev in St Petersburg 1913-1914, then was a private tutor for a year

Drafted into the *Forstei* 1915-1917

In 1917 represented the *Forstei* men as a delegate to the All-Mennonite Congress in Ohrloff and at the *Bundeskonferenz* in Halbstadt

In 1917, with Peter Froese, delegated to negotiate the release of Mennonites held in prison in Moscow by the Kerensky government

1918-1919 represented Neu Samara and Orenburg in Moscow and to the Bashkir Republic

1920 chosen at Ufa, with Peter Froese, to represent Mennonites of East Russia and Siberia in Moscow

1920-1921 worked with United Council of Religious Bodies and the Russian Relief Committee and aided Alvin J Miller to lay the foundation for the work of American Mennonite Relief (AMR) and MCC in Russia; 1921-1923 active in the AMR program

1922-1928 Vice-President of the *Allrussischer Mennonitischer landwirtschaftlicher Verein (AMLV)*, with Peter F Froese as president. Rendered great service in both the migration of the Mennonites and representing the Mennonites in Russia after the church organizational structure was suppressed by the Communists

Summer 1926 Alvin Miller and all AMR personnel left Russia. Maria Brieger had been Miller's secretary

11 September 1926 Cornelius married **Maria Brieger** in the Menno Centre, where they had both worked a number of years. Minister Johann Klassen of the MB Church of Alt Samara performed the marriage ceremony. Text taken from Lamentations 3:19-24: "...the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases..."

Maria had a son **Harold** from a previous marriage who was adopted into the family

27 June 1927 son **Walfred** born

24 September 1928 boarded train for Riga, and left Liverpool 30 November 1928

1 March 1929 son Herbert born in Winnipeg

Twins Irmgard and Justina born 20 July 1931

Justina died at age 2½

Irmgard died at age 48 of heart complications, in 1979

First lived in Winnipeg, then in 1948 moved to British Columbia

Worked with the Canadian Pacific Railway to collect the *Reiseschuld* (travel debt)

With David Toews worked on the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization

Involved in a large number of Mennonite organizations dealing with relief, education,

military exemption, MCC

From December 1945 until his death was European Commissioner for Refugee Aid and Resettlement under the MCC. Helped settle over 10,000 Mennonite refugees

Also counsellor and helper in the revival of Mennonite church life among the refugees

Associate editor of the Mennonite Encyclopedia

Died suddenly of a heart attack, while travelling in Germany, on 8 May 1954

At least 2 books written about C F Klassen: *He is Able* by H F Klassen (1978) and

Ambassador to his People by his son Herbert Klassen and his wife Maureen (1990)

Klassen, Herbert

Son of C F Klassen

Together with wife **Maureen** founded (refounded?) the Moscow Mennonite Centre

It operated in Moscow 1990-1995. At that time it was transferred to Zaporozhye in Ukraine

Klassen, Isaak Johann

Born 1882

Wife **Margareta Franz**

10 children

From Nikolayevka, Slavgorod, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Isaak was arrested 15 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Isaak and family is unknown

Klassen, J J

On the staff of, or dealing with, the AMLV office in Moscow in 1925

Klassen, Philip

On the staff of, or dealing with, the AMLV office in Moscow in 1925

Klassen, W P

Was in the Medical Corps in Moscow during World War I

Konrad, Abraham Gerhard

Born 1895

Wife **Susanna Johann**

3 children

From Wohldemfuerst, Kuban

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Address: St Suvorovskaya

Abraham arrested 5 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Abraham and family is unknown

Konradt, Peter Johann

Born 28 October 1884

Wife **Maria Johann**

4 children

From Schoental, Crimea

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Peter arrested 20 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Peter and family unknown

Kornelsen, Peter Johann

Born 19 June 1881, in Schobonev, Slavgorod, Ekaterinoslav

Wife **Maria Konrad**

Daughter **Maria**

Peter was in the Medical Corps, at first on Train No 163

He was transferred to the Moscow headquarters, and worked in the office, using his accounting skills

He brought his wife and child to live in Moscow with him, for one year, likely 1916

They lived at Novinskij Perulock, No 5, Room 11, right next to their relatives, the

Jakob Toews family

They migrated to Canada in 1924

Was pastor of the South End MB Church 1936-1947

Krueger, Peter Peter

Born 16 May 1892

Wife **Katharina Johann**

6 children

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Peter was arrested 25 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Peter and family is unknown

Lehn, Armin

Was in the Medical Corps in Moscow during World War I

Was chief of one of the Mennonite sections (W S S)

Lehn, Isaak

Was in the Medical Corps in Moscow during World War I

Lehn, Jakob J

Wife **Nina** (Russian)

Daughter **Lydia**

He was on the staff of, or dealing with the AMLV office in Moscow in 1925

Arrived in Quebec 10 November 1928, then headed for Rosthern, Saskatchewan

Loewen, A J

Probably Abraham Jakob Loewen from and estate Loewen (Abraham P)

Was in the Medical Corps in Moscow during World War I

Loewen, Mr

Was in the Medical Corps in Moscow during World War I

Martens, Abraham Jakob

Born 10 June 1895

Wife **Elisabeth Jakob**

7 children

Sister-in-law

From Karatol, Slavgorod, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Abraham arrested 10 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Abraham and family is unknown

Miller, Alvin J

Professor at Kent State University in Ohio

Director of the American Mennonite Relief (subsequently known as MCC) in Moscow in the mid 1921-1926

Knew German but not Russian

C F Klassen was his translator for some time, then a fellow worker

Mary Brieger was his secretary in the Moscow office

Sang in the Moscow fellowship group choir under the direction of Franz C Thiessen

Left Russia, together with all the other AMR staff, in the summer of 1926

Neufeld, David David

Born 11 November 1891

Wife **Elisabeth Bernhard**

2 children

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Address: Klyazma

David was arrested 20 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of David and family is unknown

Neufeld, Jakob Jakob

Born 5 January 1896

Wife **Helene David**

3 children

From Uspenda, Pavlodar, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Address in Moscow: Klyazma, Lomonossovskaya 57

Jakob was arrested 19 November 1929 and jailed; subsequent fate is unknown

Wife Helene and 3 children to Prenzlau Refugee Camp in Germany by 12 February 1930

Neufeld, Kornelius Heinrich

Born 1881

Wife **Katharina**

3 children

Sister

From Korneyevka, Omsk Region, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Kornelius was arrested 12 June 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Kornelius and family is unknown

Neufeld, Peter Abraham

Born 1888

Wife **Aganetha**

1 son

From Nikolayevka, Artemovsk Region

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Peter arrested 18 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Peter and family is unknown

Neufeld, Peter Heinrich

Born 1884

Wife **Margareta Jakob**

4 children

From Korneyevka, Omsk Region, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Peter was arrested 12 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Peter and family is unknown

Nikel, Jakob Jakob

Born 2 July 1885

Son **Heinrich Jakob** born 2 April 1909

Wife **Maria Heinrich**

4 children

From Chortitza, Slavgorod, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Jakob and son Heinrich were arrested 21 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Jakob, Heinrich and family is unknown

Perk, Mr

On the staff of, or dealing with, the AMLV office in Moscow in 1925

Peters, Heinrich Jakob

Born 1878

Wife **Anna Heinrich**

6 children

From Nikolayevka, Slavgorod, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Heinrich arrested 15 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Heinrich and family is unknown

Peters, Jakob Jakob

Born 1893

Wife **Maria Franz**

3 children

Father Peters

Sister

From Tchukreyevka, Omsk Region, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Jakob was arrested 10 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Jakob and family is unknown

Pries, Jakob Wilhelm

Born 16 October 1876

Wife **Sara Johann**

8 children

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Address: Klyazma

Jakob was arrested 20 November 1929 and jailed
Subsequent fate of Jakob and family is unknown

Reimer, Abram Cornelius

Born 1895 in Wiesenfeld
Parents Cornelius Jakob Reimer and Katharina Isaak
Youngest of nine children
Brother of Cornelius Cornelius Reimer
Big, strong and talented, specialties were mechanics and violin playing
Studied mechanical engineering at the University of Moscow
Met and married a Russian woman
Tried to dissuade his older brother Jakob from going to Canada; Jakob and family landed in Quebec 24 October 1925
Obviously became a trusted member of the Communist Party
Acquired position with the Soviet government as "engineer in charge of official vehicles at the Red Square."
During the Stalinist Purge a car in which V M Molotov was riding stalled. Another car had to be dispatched, and the Foreign Minister had to emerge from behind bullet-proof glass for a few seconds - a breach of security! On the chance that this could be a conspiracy the driver, dispatcher, mechanic and the engineer in charge were shot. The engineer in charge was Abram Reimer
Abram Reimer therefore was executed sometime about 1937 or 1938

Reimer, Anna

From the Caucasus
Tutored the two eldest Froese children, particularly in German, since their mother, Daria, did not know German
She had taught kindergarten in the Kuban

Reimer, Aron Aron

Born 1898
Wife **Anna Johann**
1 daughter
Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas
Address: Klyazma
Aron arrested 20 November 1929 and jailed
Subsequent fate of Aron and family is unknown

Reimer, Cornelius Cornelius

Born 24 February 1892 in Wiesenfeld
Parents Cornelius Jakob Reimer and Katharina Isaak
Eighth of 9 children
Village school in Wiesenfeld, teacher Adolf Reimer
Secondary school in Ohrloff, then *Kommerzschule* in Halbstadt
Studied in Moscow, Institute of Commerce
Married **Maria Alexeyevna Yegorova**. Children:
Yuri (Georgeyev) - born 15 July 1921 in Moscow, stayed in Russia with mother,

and likely never left, died in Moscow in 1992

Katharina (Kathie) - born 13 August 1927 in Moscow

Since he knew English he worked in the office of Alvin Miller of American Relief (MCC)

Brother Abram Reimer also came to Moscow to study mechanical engineering

Apparently Cornelius was a member of the executive of AMLV

Arrested night of October 17-18 1929, and taken by "Black Raven" to Lubyanka Prison

Met Peter Froese in a common cell, and had prolonged discussions with him

Eventually sentenced to ten years exile in a concentration camp in the Russian north

Seems to have gotten out of prison, and with the German invasion was able to escape from

Russia with his daughter. His wife, with the son, chose not to leave Russia

Eventually Cornelius and daughter went to Paraguay, then in 1954 to BC in Canada

Was able to get his wife out of Russia, but by then they had grown apart, and the marriage

did not work out, so she returned to Russia

Daughter Katharina married Cornelius Klassen; they had 2 children, Friederich and Cornelius

Husband Cornelius died in a truck accident 25 January 1967 in New Westminster, BC

Cornelius died 18 December 1968 in Mission City, British Columbia

Reimer, Erika

Born in Tashkent, daughter of engineer Jakob Reimer and a Russian woman

To Moscow at some time before 1937

Father Jakob Reimer executed in Moscow in 1937 as part of the "Great Purge" when she

was 11 years of age

Studied Geology at the University of Moscow

Married, name is now Erika Guriev

Reimer, Heinrich Heinrich

Born 30 March 1899

Wife **Elisabeth (Liese) Johann**

From Spat, Crimea

Came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Heinrich arrested 13 November 1929 and jailed, presumably for a long time

Subsequent fate unknown

Reimer, Jakob

From the Crimea; attended the Karassan *Zentralschule*

Student in St Petersburg, probably engineering; likely spent additional time studying in

Moscow and Germany

Was very gifted musically

Siblings Ivan, Sonya, Katya

Married Mary Brieger; moved to Moscow, possibly because Mary was transferred there

Son Harold was born 5 October 1923 in Moscow

Transferred, likely as an engineer, to Tashkent for a time

Divorce, likely about 1925, possibly when he was transferred

Married a Russian woman in Tashkent

Daughter Erika was born in 1926

Then likely moved back to Moscow

Jakob was executed in Moscow in 1937 as part of the "Great Purge"

Reimer, Katya (Katharina)

From the Crimea

Sister of Jakob, Ivan and Sonya

Katya and Sonya were friends of Mary Brieger

Studied in Moscow, apparently was a good student

Ivan died early, so he may not have come to Moscow

Reimer, Sonya

From the Crimea

Sister of Jakob, Ivan and Katya (Katharina)

Sonya and Katya were friends of Mary Brieger

Studied in Moscow, apparently was a good student

Sang in the fellowship group choir under the direction of Franz C Thiessen

Rempel, Dietrich Dietrich

Born 11 October 1873

3 children

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Address: Klyazma, Tschaiykovskaya 21

Arrested 21 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Dietrich and family is unknown

Rempel, Jakob Aron

(see biography p 269)

Born 9 April 1883 in Heuboden, Borozenko Colony

Parents Aron Aron Rempel and Justina Peters

Became a teacher, then went to *Predigerschule* in Basel Switzerland 1906-1912

Teacher in various schools

Married Maria Sudermann

Children:

Alexander - born 26 May 1915

Eleonore - born 20 March 1918

Wife died, married her sister **Sophie**

Children:

Paul - born 19 June 1923

Peter - born 11 September 1924

Ernst - born 8 November 1925

Martha - born 13 December 1927

Magdalena - born 23 July 1930

Ordained to the ministry in the Neu-Chortitza Church in 1914, elected as elder in 1919

October 1922 elected chairman of the *Kommision fuer Kirchenangelegenheiten (KfK)*

Many periods of interrogation by government officials

Banned from home in September 1929, so the family moved to Moscow

Jakob was arrested 1 December 1929, taken to Lubyanka, then to the dreaded Butyrka State

Prison. Tortured. Eventually sentenced to ten years in exile

Escaped 24 January 1932 near Omsk. Did briefly see his family and son Alexander
Recaptured March 1936; shot 11 September 1941
Family eventually escaped to Germany and Canada

Schierling, Klaas Peter

Born 17 December 1880

Wife **Elisabeth Peter**

1 daughter

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Klaas was arrested 6 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Klaas and family is unknown

Scholtze, Mr

French background, had married a Mennonite

Wife **Mrs Scholtze**

Scholtze was the pastor of the little Mennonite church which for a time met in Moscow,
likely 1924-1926

Thiessen, Dietrich David

Born 9 May 1895

Wife **Helena Isaak**

4 children

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Dietrich was arrested 15 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Dietrich and family is unknown

Thiessen, Dietrich Kornelius

(see biography Ekaterinoslav chapter p 173)

Originally from Chortitza, Chortitza

Completed his training as an architect in Germany

Dietrich was employed by a construction firm, G A List of Moscow from April 1897 until
March 1898. Thereafter moved to Ekaterinoslav, where beginning in April 1902 he
worked as an architect, chiefly for the railway

Thiessen, Franz Cornelius

Franz Cornelius (should really be Kornelius) Thiessen was born 25 July 1881 in Rueckenau,
Molotschna

His parents were Kornelius Thiessen and Katharina Nickel, who were married in 1878

Parents moved to the Crimea, but Franz and older sister Susanna stayed with their
grandparents as adoptive children

Franz went to *Dorfschule* in Rueckenau, *Zentralschule* in Ohrloff and took teacher training in
Halbstadt

Continued to use his musical talents, singing and playing instruments

Married Lydia Wieler 9 August 1901

Children:

Johannes - born 19 August 1902, died 5 May 1905

Katharina (Kaethe) - born 30 May 1906 in Rueckenau, Molotschna, participated in the
work of the AMLV office in Moscow and sang in the young people's choir,

married Heinrich Franz Klassen 14 August 1927 in Rosthern, Saskatchewan,
moved to Winnipeg where Heinrich was manager of the Christian Press
(1945-1967) and editor of the *Mennonitische Rundschau*, 5 children, she was
leader of a ladies group, Heinrich died 3 March 1969, Kaethe died
7 October 1998, both in Winnipeg

To Reinfeld, Sagradovka, teaching for 2 years

Then to Rueckenau, where grandfather Martens purchased a small farm for them

Studied in Sevastopol, where he stayed in the home of P M Friesen

Completed exams for teaching certificate in Feodosia, Crimea

Special course in teacher training in Kharkov likely winter of 1905

1906 was the first teacher appointed to *Zentralschule* in Alexanderkrone. He taught Russian
language, literature and history

Wife Lydia died 11 November 1908 of tuberculosis

10 April 1910 married Lydia's sister **Margaretha**

Children:

Nicolai - born 25 May 1911, died 17 September 1913

Lydia - born 17 May 1914 in Davlekanovo, Ufa, to Canada with parents, married
John Koslowsky 26 June 1937 in Winnipeg, moved to Abbotsford after 1939,
4 children, John died 29 October 1975, Lydia died 8 November 1990, both in
Abbotsford, British Columbia

Irene - born 31 July 1918 in Davlekanovo, Ufa, to Canada with parents, married
Heinrich Abram DeFehr 20 June 1942 in Winnipeg, 4 children, Irene died
19 August 1987 in Abbotsford, Heinrich died 5 March 2005, also in Abbotsford,
British Columbia

Martha - born 2 September 1922 in Davlekanovo, Ufa, to Canada with her family

Victor - born 14 February 1924 in Davlekanovo, Ufa, to Canada with parents, married
Hertha Krahn 29 June 1929, 5 children, died 9 May 1976 in Abbotsford,
British Columbia

Ruth - born 11 February 1929 in Rosthern, Saskatchewan, married Harold C Klassen
25 August 1951 in Abbotsford, 4 children, Harold died 1 January 1996, Ruth died
2 April 2002, both in Abbotsford, British Columbia

1913 position in *Zentralschule* in Davlekanovo; known for discipline, consistency and music

1915-1917 to Yalta for *Sanitaetsdienst*; taught soldiers basket weaving!

Back to Davlekanovo, survived Revolution and famine, resigned spring of 1924

Spring of 1924 accepted position with AMLV in Moscow, editor for *Der praktische Landwirt*
and accompanied immigrants from Moscow to the Soviet border

Organized a young people's choir to participate in Sunday church services

400 year celebration of the start of the Anabaptist movement in 1925

New economic government policy allowed the AMLV to become a marketing agent and retailer
for Mennonites in all of Russia except Ukraine

Franz sold their house in Davlekanovo on 25 July 1925, giving him the money to buy passages
to Canada for his family and grandmother Wieler-Martens

Arrived in Quebec 1 August 1925

Taught in Rosthern German-English Academy for 7 years;
To Winnipeg in 1932, ordained as MB minister in 1937; often *Saengerfest* participant
To BC in October 1943, bought farm in Abbotsford
Still active in teaching and music; died 24 February 1950 of heart attack
Margaretha died 9 December 1984

Thiessen, F P

Was in the Medical Corps in Moscow during World War I

Toews, Heinrich Peter

Born 24 January 1889

Wife **Kornelia Abraham**

4 children

From Karassan, Crimea

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Heinrich arrested 11 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Heinrich and family is unknown

Toews, Jakob

Wife **Agatha Konrad**

2 children

Jakob was in the medical corps, stationed in Moscow

He moved his family to Moscow for one year, likely 1916

They lived at Novinskij Perulock, No 5, in the room next to their relatives, Peter Kornelsens

Toews, Johann Johann

(see separate biography p 266)

Born 25 June 1878 in Fabrikerwiese, Molotschna

Second oldest child of Johann Aron Toews

Wife **Susanna Wiens** of Ladekop

3 children, **Peter, Wilhelm** and daughter **Euphrosine (Frosya)**

Johann was a teacher and an MB minister

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Address: Klyazma, Gogolevskaya 9

Arrested 11 November 1929, and jailed in the Butyrka State Prison

Eventually sentenced to 5 years in a concentration camp, where he died 21 February 1933

Susanna and the 3 children to the Prenzlau Refugee Camp in Germany by 10 February 1930,

and eventually went to Brazil

Unruh, Abraham Abraham

Born 1871

Wife **Susanna Tobias**

Son **Friedrich Abraham**

2 more children

From Subrovka, Pavlodar, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Abraham and Friedrich arrested on 15 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Abraham, Friedrich and family is unknown

Unruh, Kornelius Benjamin

Born 1849 in Waldheim, Molotschna

Graduated from Halbstadt *Zentralschule*, where his teacher was Gustav Rempel

Started teaching on an estate, then Blumenort, Molotschna

During summers he studied privately in Ekaterinoslav, Kiev and Odessa, learning Russian, French and educational methods

1870 accepted position in Halbstadt *Zentralschule*

Interrupted teaching with further education in Switzerland, then the winter of 1872-1873 in Moscow

Then became principal and teacher at the Ohrloff *Zentralschule* for 32 years

Involved in publishing religious and historical texts

Established a secondary school and Bible school; tremendous capacity for work

Died 17 August 1910

Von Kampen, Julius

From Chortitza

Was in the Medical Corps in Moscow during World War I

Studied at the University of Moscow, Faculty of Law

Practiced as a lawyer in Alexandrovsk

Voth, Heinrich Heinrich

Born 1902

Mother **Anna Wilhelmina Dahl**

Sister

They came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Heinrich was arrested 10 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Heinrich and family is unknown

Warkentin, David Johann

Born 10 April 1896

Wife **Anna Heinrich**

1 daughter

From Ekaterinovka, Omsk Region, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

David was arrested 15 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of David and family is unknown

Warkentin, Peter Johann

Born 10 November 1906

Father and Mother

1 sister

From Ekaterinovka, Omsk Region, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Peter was arrested 15 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Peter and family is unknown

Wiebe, Heinrich Dietrich

Born 1886

Wife **Maria Adolf**

3 children

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Address: Klyazma

Heinrich arrested 2 December 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Heinrich and family is unknown

Wiens, Franz Franz

Born 1882

Wife **Anna Peter**

3 children

From Nikolayevka, Slavgorod, Siberia

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Arrested 15 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Franz and family is unknown

Wiens, Johann Johann

Born 8 August 1886, likely in Halbstadt

Parents Johann Johann Wiens and Maria Wedel

Attended *Zentralschule* in Halbstadt 1900-1903

Killed in a train accident in Moscow 8 November 1929

Wiens, Johann Julius

Born 1856

Son **David Johann** born 3 February 1894

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Johann arrested 18 November 1929 and jailed; subsequent fate unknown

Son David in Prenzlau Refugee Camp in Germany by 19 February 1930

Willms, Heinrich Kornelius

Born 1878

Wife **Eva Peter**

6 children

Family came to Moscow to obtain exit visas

Heinrich was arrested 21 November 1929 and jailed

Subsequent fate of Heinrich and family is unknown

STUDENTS IN MOSCOW

Braeul, Johann Johann - Molotschna, with Kornelius Unruh and P M Friesen, studied in Moscow 1872-1873, taught Russian language and history in the Molotschna

Dyck, Arnold - Hochfeld, Chortitza, Academy of Art, writer and editor

Epp, Heinrich Heinrich - Chortitza, studied Philology and History at the University of Moscow, taught in Chortitza *Zentralschule*, and in time was the principal

Esau, Catherine - Ekaterinoslav, Golitsin Women's Agricultural College, to the United States, taught botany at the University of California, wrote 6 books

Fast, Peter Peter - Muensterberg, Molotschna, University of Moscow, teacher

Friesen, Peter Martin - Sparrau, Molotschna, studied in Moscow 1872-1873, teacher and historian

Froese, Heinrich - Gruenfeld, Academy of Agriculture, worked in Chortitza

Funk, Peter - Neuenburg, Chortitza, University of Moscow, law, practiced in Ekaterinoslav

Goossen, Dietrich - Schoensee, Molotschna, University of Moscow, teacher/professor

Heese, Peter Heinrich - Ekaterinoslav, University of Moscow, Molotschna School Board

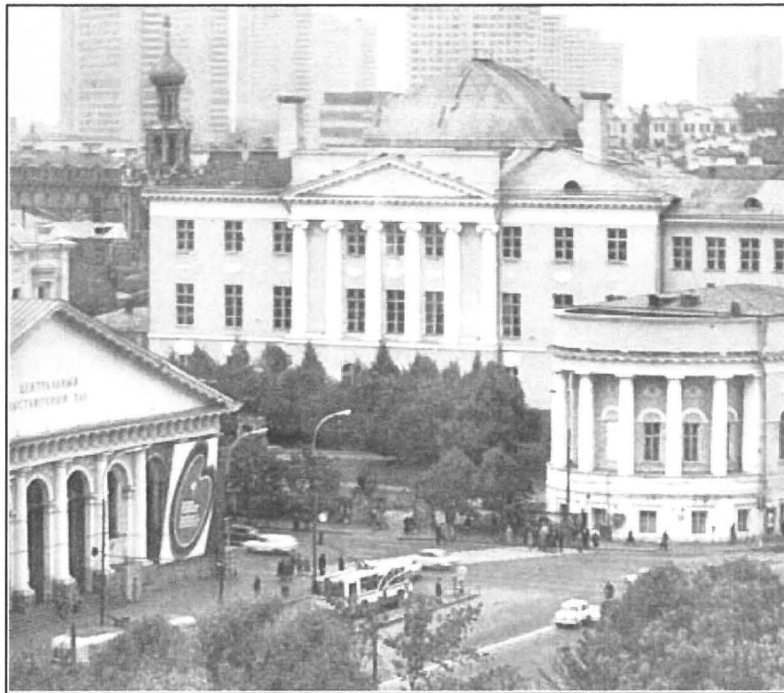
Reimer, Abram Cornelius - Wiesenfeld, University of Moscow, mechanical engineering, engineer in charge of Red Square vehicles

Reimer, Cornelius Cornelius - Wiesenfeld, Institute of Commerce

Reimer, Jakob - Crimea, studied engineering, likely at the University of Moscow

Von Kampen, Julius - Chortitza, University of Moscow, law, practiced in Alexandrovsk

Unruh, Kornelius Benjamin - teacher, private study in Moscow winter of 1872-1873, teacher in Ohrloff *Zentralschule*, author and minister



The old building of the University of Moscow, in use during Mennonite times. To the left is Central Exhibition Hall

Medical Service during World War I



Sanitaeter Headquarters building in Moscow



Medical Corps workers in Moscow

Top row l to r: J J Dyck, A J Loewen, Loewen, Janzen,
Isaak Lehn, Armin Lehn (the Chief of the group)

Bottom row: F P Thiessen, W P Klassen, Eitzen,
Von Kampen, H H Enns

MENNONITE INSTITUTIONS

American Mennonite Relief

Special organization set up by the Mennonite Central Committee to distribute relief in Russia
Director in Russia Alvin J Miller, with office in Moscow

Operated under an agreement in which, within the limits of its resources and facilities, it would supply "food, clothing, and medical relief to the needy civilian population, especially women and children and the sick, regardless of race, religion or political status"

The agreement was reached 1 October 1921, and although the MCC resolution was to close the office 1 October 1925, the staff continued to work until mid-1926, when it was felt to be unsafe to continue

Since Alvin Miller knew no Russian, Cornelius F Klassen at first acted as his interpreter
Mary Brieger (later she married C F Klassen) was Alvin Miller's secretary

Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirtschaftlicher Verein (AMLV)

Committee to establish organization for eastern Mennonite communities met in Alexanderthal
November 1922

First meeting of representatives held in Alexanderthal 10-16 October 1923

Peter F Froese chosen president, other executive members C F Klassen and F F Isaak

Met in Davlekanovo in 27-30 June 1924

Likely the executive met in Moscow after the General Conference, so on 19-24 January 1925,
but the whole *Verein* met in Moscow 13-16 May 1925

Again met in Moscow 23-26 February 1927

Maintained an office in Moscow

Address: Taganskaya Ulitsa, a spacious eight-room residence

For a time, spring 1924 to July 1925, Franz C Thiessen worked in the office, often accompanying Mennonites to the border of Russia as they were migrating to Canada

Published *Der Praktische Landwirt*, editor Peter F Froese

The office also served as Mennonite Affairs Office (*Menobschtschsetvo*)

AMLV represented all Mennonites in Samara, Ufa, Orenburg, The German Volga Republic

(Am Trakt), the northern Caucasus, Crimea, West Siberia, Kazakhstan (Pavlodar),

Turkestan (Aulie Ata and Khiva), that is, all Mennonite settlements except those in

Ukraine. There were 19 chapters, 56 subchapters. It represented about 44,000

Mennonites, roughly two-fifths of those living in the Soviet Union. Some of the primary work consisted of the improvement of seed and stock. In both fields even the government recognized the excellent work done

The AMLV also had representatives outside of the USSR:

A A Friesen in North America

B H Unruh and A J Fast in Germany

It advised and helped many of the Mennonite immigrants who were going through Moscow on the way to Canada. Representatives often accompanied the refugees to the Soviet border

People in the picture of the office staff in 1925:

Bartel, Mr	Klassen, C F
Ewert, Mr	Klassen, J J
Froese, P F	Klassen, Philip
Isaak, A	Lehn, J
Isaak, F	Perk, Mr
Isaak, Nalya (Kornelia)	Thiessen, F C
Klassen, Abram Johann	Thiessen, Katharina (Kaethe)

By 1927 government maneuvering made the economic status of AMLV difficult, putting it into a deficit position

In 1928 the executive committee was forced to accept the proposal to liquidate AMLV

Der Praktische Landwirt

Official publication of the *Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirtschaftlicher Verein (AMLV)*

Published monthly, starting 15 May 1925, the last number in December 1926

It was first proposed at a conference in Alt Samara held on 11 October 1922

Peter F Froese was the editor; address was Moscow, Taganskaya Street 8; telephone number was 3-99-67

It was a valuable specialized journal, which gave German farmers practical advice for successful management, and also provided statistics and reports on the various Mennonite settlements and institutions

Peter F Froese, C F Klassen, N Schmidt and J W Ewert were frequent contributors

Government censorship caused increasing difficulties, so publication had to cease at the end of 1926

General Mennonite Conference meeting in Moscow 13-18 January 1925

Called the "Second Martyrs' Synod", because many of the delegates were subsequently imprisoned/exiled

The conference was called to order by Elder Jakob Rempel, chairman of the KfK, quoting the official government permission to hold the conference - issued on 13 November 1924, Order No 28109-2

The keynote address was delivered by Elder Abram Klassen of Neu-Halbstadt. Using Hebrews 10:23-25 as text, he answered the question of the purpose of this conference. They had to hold fast to the faith and hope, and do this in love and humility.

Jakob Rempel, Aron Dueck, Johann Wiens and Jakob Paetkau were elected to the presidium, Kornelius K Martens was secretary. In total 74 delegates were registered from many churches across the country

Items discussed at the conference included:

1. Report from the KfK - The executive was trying to assure the continued smooth functioning of churches, assuming religious freedom, and the ability to teach their children. While initially the government seemed to allow some of these initiatives, this consent was later rescinded
2. Report from the districts across the country

3. Building up of the spiritual/moral atmosphere in the churches
 “*Die Hebung des geistlichen Zustanden in der Gemeinde*” presented by Gerhard Kopper from Romanovka, and subsequently printed in *Unser Blatt* November 1925, pp 18-20 and December 1925, pp 47-48
 4. Discipline exercised by the churches
 “*Disziplin in den Mennonitischen Gemeinden*” presented by Johann Wiebe from Crimea, and subsequently published in *Unser Blatt* February 1926, pp 100-102
 5. Christian marriage
 “*Die christliche Ehe*” presented by H Voth, from Schoenau, Sagradovka, and subsequently published in *Unser Blatt* December 1925, pp 68-69
 6. The spiritual leaders of the church
 7. Worship service singing and choirs
 “*Gottesdienstlicher Gesang und Saengerchoere*” presented by Franz C Thiessen from Davlekanovo and Moscow, subsequently published in *Unser Blatt* October 1925, pp 12-13 and November 1925, pp 50-51
 8. Worship services for adults and children
 “*Gottesdienstliche Versammlungen mit Erwachsenen und Kindern*” presented by Franz Quiring of Koeppenthal, subsequently published in *Unser Blatt* January 1926, pp 71-73
 9. Bible conferences
 10. Itinerant ministers
 “*Reiseprediger*” presented by Jakob Toews of Alexandertal, Alt Samara, Subsequently published in *Unser Blatt* February 1926, pp 100-102
 11. Missionary activities in the churches
 12. Production of Christian literature and its distribution in the churches
- Letters later published described the conference as dealing with all the “necessary questions facing the churches. It was very nice! The delegates could discuss their problems without interference...It was the impression of the delegates that nothing hindered them from making progress.” “Much was discussed, and we could see how necessary it is to work in our country. In peace and quiet the representatives of the faithful, here in the capital, could discuss the needs of the churches...”
- Little did they know that this was the calm before the storm!

Mennonite Church

Conducted in an out-of-the-way place, difficult to get to, in a basement room with no windows.
 This way the spies would be less likely to find it
 Services conducted in German
 Minister Scholtze, of French background, who had married a Mennonite; also a lay leader
 For a time there was a choir, conducted by Franz C Thiessen, spring 1924 to July 1925
 At least 14 members in the choir, 8 women and 6 men
 On a few occasions Alvin J Miller sang solos
 Celebrated the 400-year anniversary of Anabaptist beginnings in 1925
 Likely functioned 1924-1926

American Mennonite Relief (MCC) and AMLV



Alvin J Miller



The AMLV executive in 1928, H F Dyck, secretary, Peter F Froese, chairman, and C F Klassen, vice-chairman



The AMLV office staff in Moscow in 1925

Back row l to r: Philip Klassen, J J Klassen, A J Klassen, J Lehn, A Isaak, Perk, Bartel

Middle row: F C Thiessen, Ewert, Peter F Froese, F Isaak, C F Klassen

Front row: Russian typist, Nalya Isaak, Katharina (Kaethe) Thiessen

Der Praktische Landwirt.

„Einigkeit macht stark.“

Organ des Allrussischen Mennonitischen Landwirtschaftlichen Vereins.

2. Jahrgang.

Moskau, Dezember 1926.

Nr. 12
(19).

Die IV. ordentliche Vertreter-Versammlung des A. M. L. V. wird am 15. Februar, 1927, in Moskau zusammentreten.

Folgendes Programm ist in Aussicht genommen:

1. Die Eröffnung der Versammlung, Wahl des Präsidiums, Sekretariats und der Mandatkommission.
2. Arbeitsberichte der Verwaltung und des Rates.
3. Finanzbericht der Verwaltung und Bericht der Revisionskommission.
4. Berichte der Ortsorganisationen.
5. Agrarkulturelle Maßnahmen des Vereins, Absatz- und Versorgungsoperationen.
6. Organisationsfragen.
7. Budget.
8. Wahlen.
9. Laufende Fragen.

Drei Vertreter - Versammlungen des A. M. L. V.

Von C. F. Klaffen.

Wie schon in der vorigen Nummer erwähnt, wollen wir heute noch einen ausführlicheren Rückblick auf unsere 3 Vertreter-Versammlungen tun.

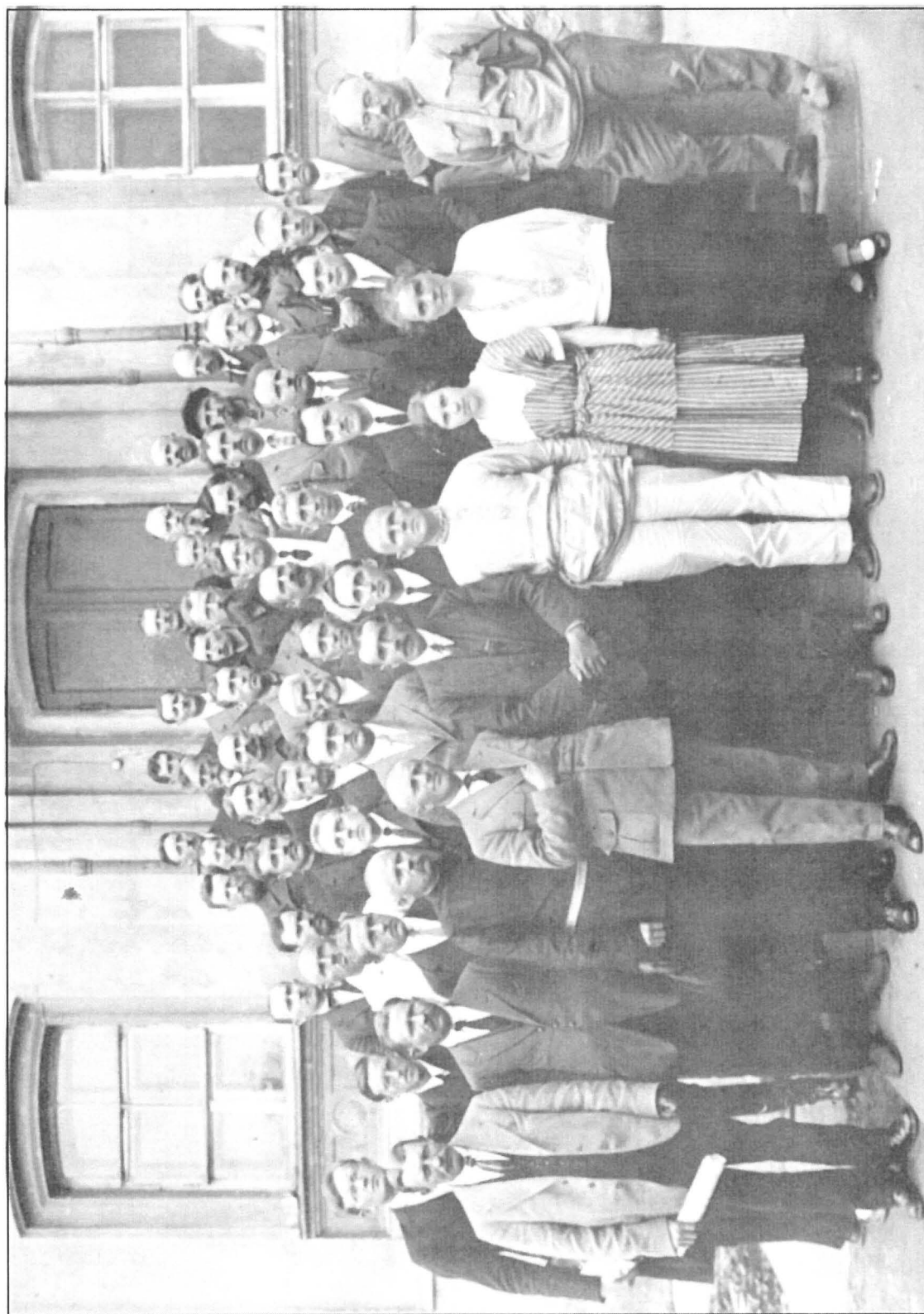
1.

Die 1. V.-V. fand vom 10. - 16. Oktober 1923 in Alexandertal, Alt Samara, statt. Ein recht großes Tagesprogramm war vorgesehen; wichtige Fragen kamen zur Verhandlung, und die 46 Seiten des Protokolls zeugen davon, daß man sich sehr rege beteiligte. Die Stimmung war eine gehobene, man freute sich, nun endlich seine eigene Organisation zu haben und war als Gründerversammlung bemüht, einen guten Grund zu legen. Man wollte vieles voraussehen, man stellte dem Verein große Aufgaben, und man versprach sich auch viel von seiner

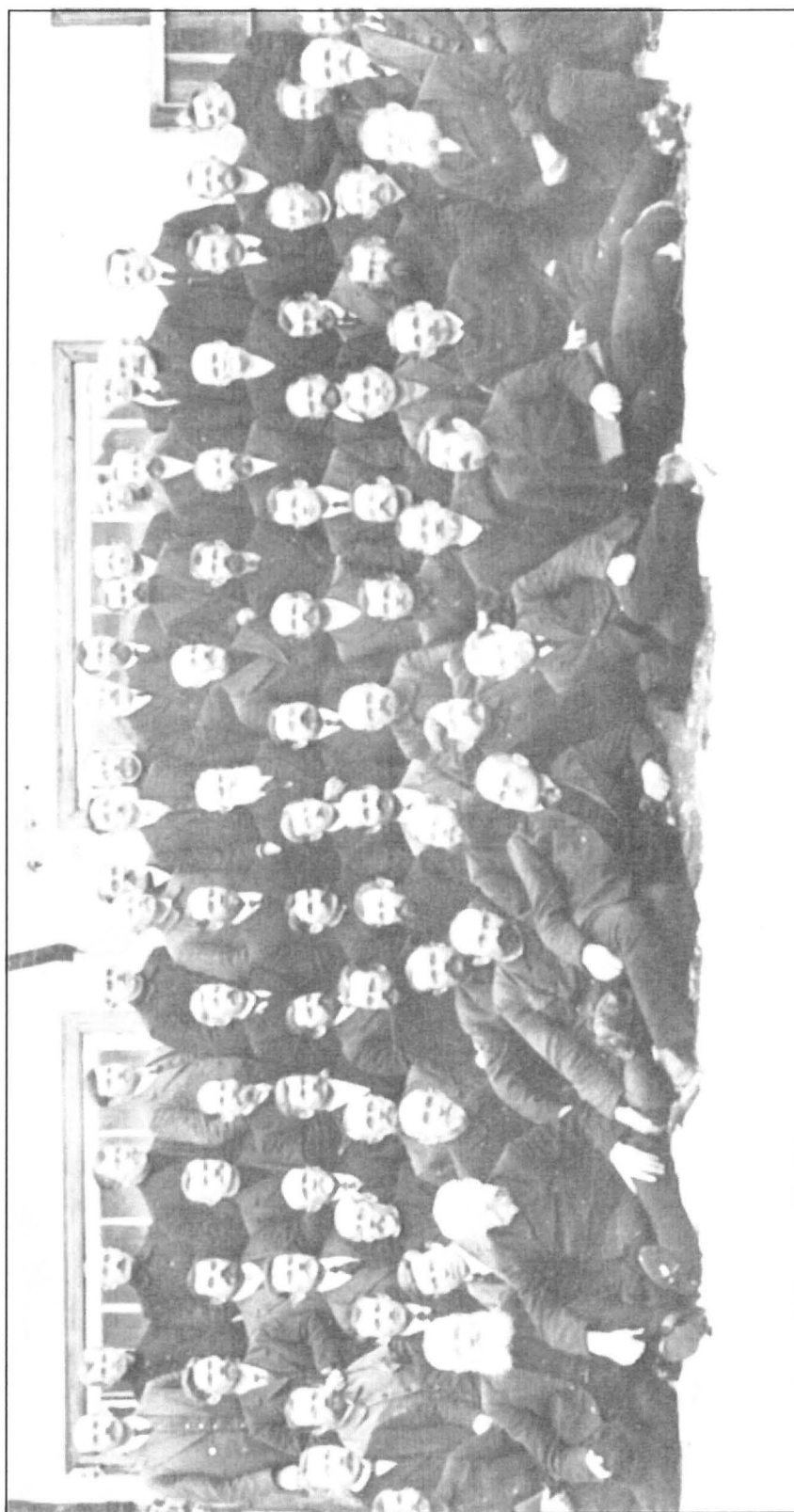
Arbeit. Man wollte doch wieder aufbauen, was Krieg, Hunger und Typhus zerstört hatten. Und daß es da viel zu tun gab, davon zeugten die ausgestellten Diagramme. Man fühlte in sich neue Kräfte, oder richtiger—alte Kräfte neu erwachen. Man sah wieder Arbeitsmöglichkeiten, und diese gaben Mut, mit vereinten Kräften dranzugehen, die gesunkenen Wirtschaften zu heben. Man fühlte sich zu dieser Arbeit berechtigt.

Der Bericht des Organisationskomitees schilderte die Arbeit der Moskauer Vertreter, die auf einer Konferenz der östlichen Mennonitenkolonien im Juli 1920 gewählt worden waren. In den Jahren 1921/22, wo die allgemeine schwere Lage sich auch in unseren Ansiedlungen besonders fühlbar machte, wo Missernte, Hunger und Typhus alles Leben lahmlegten, war ja an keinen Aufbau zu denken, es galt nur den Zerstörungsprozeß nach Möglichkeit zu hemmen.

The last issue of *Der Praktische Landwirt*. Further publication made impossible by government interference



Allrussische Mennonitische Landwirtschaftlicher Verein (AMLV) meeting in Moscow 13-16 May 1925. Among others note the presence of President Peter F Froese, B B Janz, Vice-President C F Klassen and Franz C Thiessen



General Mennonite Conference meeting in Moscow 13-18 January 1925. Often called the "Second Martyrs' Synod" because so many of the representatives were subsequently executed or exiled. For detailed list see following pages

DELEGATES TO THE GENERAL MENNONITE CONFERENCE
Held in Moscow 13-18 January 1925

List of delegates on the published picture

Presumably the official picture likely taken at the end of the conference

This list is very similar, but there are some differences with the published list of delegates

Rows starting in the front, left to right

Abbreviations: M - Minister; E - Elder ; MC - Mennonite Church; MB - Mennonite Brethren Church; EMC - Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church

It should be noted that some of those originally presumed to have died in exile did actually survive

This list includes the best information available in 1949

Row 1

1. Martens, Franz Franz - E, Davlekanovo, Ufa, fate unknown
2. Siemens, Heinrich Kornelius - M, MB, Gortschakovo, Ufa, to Canada
3. Friesen, Franz Jakob - M, MB, Tchunayevka, Siberia, to Canada
4. Bergen, Bernhard Kornelius - M, MB, Pleshanovo, Neu Samara, exiled
5. Klassen, Peter Jakob - MB, Ekaterinovka, Ignatyeva, fate unknown
6. Loewen, David Heinrich - M, MC, Romanovka, Orenburg, exiled

Row 2

7. Peters, Johann Johann - Missionary, Romanovka, Orenburg, fate unknown
8. Lohrenz, Gerhard Johann - M, MC, Neu-Schoensee, Sagradovka, teacher in Canada
9. Reimer, Aron Aron - E, MB, Schoental, Slavgorod, Siberia, to USA
10. Martens, Johann Johann - MB, Olgafeld, Fuerstenland, fate unknown
11. Pauls, Peter Peter - M, MB, Nikolaipol, Aulie Ata to China, then Canada
12. Janzen, Johann Martin - M, MB, Orlov, Memrik, exiled
13. Epp, Peter Peter - M, MC, Gruenfeld, Slavgorod, Siberia, to Canada
14. Gaede, Gerhard Johann - Teacher, MB, Tchunayevka, Siberia, exiled
15. Friedrichsen, Peter Hermann - E, MC, Busau, Crimea, fate unknown

Row 3

16. Nickel, Kornelius Peter - E, MC, Lindenau, Koepfental, Am Trakt, exiled
17. Janzen, Nikolai Franz - M, MC, Neukirch, Molotschna, exiled
18. Siemens, Peter Julius - MB, Gussarovka, Naumenko, fate unknown
19. Penner - Nikolaifeld, Sagradovka, fate unknown
20. Rempel, Hermann Aron - E, EMB, Karassan, Crimea, exiled
21. Loewen, Kornelius - M, MC, Blumstein, Molotschna, exiled
22. Voth, Heinrich Peter - E, MC, Schoenau, Sagradovka, exiled
23. Harder, Kornelius David - E, MC, Schoensee, Slavgorod, Siberia, to Canada
24. Willms, Gerhard Heinrich - M, MC, Hamberg, Molotschna, exiled
25. Froese, Peter Peter - M, MC, Ekaterinovka, Siberia, fate unknown
26. Duerksen, Gerhard Jakob - MB, Alexanderthal, Molotschna, to Canada

27. Rahn, Johann Johann - Choir conductor, MB, Waldheim, Molotschna, exiled
28. Klassen, Jakob, Jakob - Grigoryevka Colony, fate unknown
29. Neustaetter, Abram Kornelius - M, MB, Friedensfeld, fate unknown
30. Wiens, Dietrich Johann - M, EMB, Konteniusfeld, Molotschna, exiled

Row 4

31. Dyck, Peter Heinrich - M, New York, Ignatyev, fate unknown
32. Koop, Dietrich Heinrich - M, MC, Alexanderkrone, Molotschna, to Canada
33. Wiens, Bernhard Peter - M, MC, Gnadenthal, Molotschna, exiled
34. Redekopp, David Isaak - Ignatyev, Ignatyev, fate unknown
35. Wiens, Johann Gerhard - M, MB, Tchongrav, Crimea, to Canada
36. Dyck, Aron Aron - M, MC, Margenau, Molotschna, exiled
37. Ediger, Alexander Heinrich - E, MC, Schoensee, Molotschna, died in exile
38. Rempel, Jakob Aron - E, MC, Gruenfeld, Borozenko, executed in exile
39. Willms, Abram Peter - M, MB, Fuerstenwerder, Molotschna, to Canada
40. Paetkau, Jakob Heinrich - E, MC, Kalinovo, Memrik, exiled
41. Martens, Kornelius Kornelius - M, MB, Grossweide, Molotschna, died in exile
42. Klassen, Abram Aron - E, MC, Halbstadt, Molotschna, exiled
43. Loewen, Jakob Abram - M, EMC, Tiegenhagen, Lichtfelde, Molotschna, to Canada
44. Kliewer, Johann Johann - M, MB, Friedensfeld, Sagradovka, to Canada

Row 5

45. Krahn, Isaak Gerhard - E, MC, Dolinovka, Orenburg, exiled
46. Bueckert, Johann Johann - M, MC, Borissopol (No 2), Arkadak, to Canada
47. Neufeld, Peter - E, MC, Chotitza, died in USSR
48. Siemens, Jakob Gerhard - Missionary, Spat, Crimea, fate unknown
49. Letkemann, Jakob Jakob - E, MC, Karassan, Crimea, exiled
50. Huebert, Jakob Franz - E, MB, Margenau, Siberia, fate unknown
51. Wiens, Jakob Gerhard - E, MB, Tchunayevka, Siberia, exiled
52. Bergen, Peter Peter - E, MC, Ekaterinovka, Siberia, fate unknown
53. Braun, Daniel Jakob - M, MB, Kronsthal, Chortitza, to Canada
54. Toews, Jakob Jakob - M, MC, Alexandertal, Alt Samara, fate unknown
55. Teichroeb, Abram Peter - M, MB, Kantserovka (No 3), Orenburg, fate unknown
56. Wiebe, Johann Johann - M, MC, Minlertschik, Crimea, exiled
57. Janzen, Heinrich Jakob - MB, Dolinsk, Neu Samara, fate unknown
58. Toews, Aron Peter - M, MC, Rosenthal, Chortitza, exiled

Row 6

59. Neufeld, Johann - Naumenko, fate unknown
60. Koop, David David - M, MC, Ohrloff, Molotschna, exiled
61. Unknown
62. Martens, Johann Kornelius - E, MC, Einlage, Chortitza, exiled
63. Pauls, Julius Heinrich - Ekaterinoslav, Chortitza, fate unknown
64. Paetkau, David David - M, MB, Kamenka, Orenburg, exiled
65. Enns, Kornelius Kornelius - MC, Altona, Molotschna, fate unknown
66. Schellenberg, Peter Peter - MC, Memrik, Memrik, fate unknown

67. DeFehr, Cornelius Abram - MB, Millerovo, Wohldemfuerst, Kuban, to Canada
68. Reimer, Johann Kornelius - MB, Wohldemfuerst, Kuban, fate unknown
69. Wiens, Kornelius Abram - E, MB, Wohldemfuerst, Kuban, exiled
70. Goerzen, Jakob Jakob - MC, Alexandradar, Kuban, fate unknown
71. Martens, Kornelius Jakob - M, MB, Millerovo, Wohldemfuest, Kuban, fate unknown
72. Unrau, Heinrich David - MC, Grossweide, Molotschna, fate unknown
73. Friesen, Heinrich Abram - M, MC, Schoenau, Molotschna, exiled
74. Friesen, Nikolai Johann - M, MC, Pleshanovo, Neu Samara, fate unknown
75. Braun - not sure which Braun it is, Peter Isaak, or Isaak Georg
76. Kopper, Gerhard Peter - E, MC, Koeppental, Aulie Ata, fate unknown
77. Martens, Heinrich Jakob - MC, Gruenfeld, Borozenko, fate unknown

Summary

The fate unknown.....	30
Exiled, some eventually got out, most died in exile.....	29
Migrated to Canada.....	15
To USA.....	1
Died in USSR.....	1
Unknown delegate.....	1
Total.....	77

Published list of delegates includes people not in the picture

Braun, Isaak Georg - from Orenburg, representing the Deyevka MC
 Braun, Peter Isaak - from Halbstadt, representing Pordenau MC
 Funk, Johann Heinrich - from Blumenfeld, Nepluyevka, representing the Nikolai MC
 Nickel, Gerhard Gerhard - from Gnadenfeld, representing Rudnerweide MC
 Penner, David Johann - from Adelsheim, Yazykovo, representing Nikolaipol MC
 Penner, Heinrich Heinrich - Alexandertal, Alt Samara, representing the Alexandertal MC
 Rempel, Heinrich Bernhard - from Osterwick, representing the Chortitza MC

Strangely, the published list of delegates does not include Jakob Aron Rempel and Alexander Heinrich Ediger, who were actively participating in the proceedings

Delegates in the picture not on the published list

Krahn, Isaak Gerhard - Dolinovka, Orenburg
 Loewen, Kornelius - Blumstein, Molotschna
 Martens, Heinrich Jakob - Gruenfeld, Borozenko
 Neufeld, Johann - Naumenko
 Penner - Nikolaifeld, Sagradovka
 Peters, Johann Johann - Missionary, Romanovka, Orenburg
 Reimer, Johann Kornelius - Wohldemfuerst, Kuban



Young people's choir of the Moscow fellowship in 1925
Franz C Thiessen conductor



Margaretha and Franz Thiessen in Moscow in 1925, with children
Lydia, Victor, Katharina (Kaethe), Irene and Martha

AT THE GATES OF MOSCOW SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER, 1929

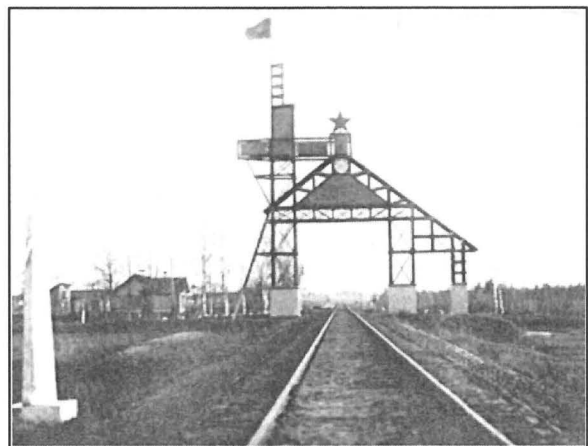
“Mennonites refused admission to Canada; Germany in doubt as to policy in regard to them, so Soviet ships them back to Siberia.” This headline from the *New York Times* of 1 December 1929 in a few words encapsulated the fate of many Mennonites during that period. Over 13,000 refugees, including many Mennonites, but also Lutherans and Roman Catholics, gathered in Moscow in a desperate attempt to leave the USSR. Obtaining exit visas was one problem, but finding entrance into another country presented another obstacle. Canada was unwilling to accept more refugees, Germany was near economic collapse, so the Soviets simply shipped those not accepted back home, or into exile.

When the Bolsheviks first swept into power they immediately began implementing their basic philosophy, such as confiscating and collectivizing land, taking over the schools, and preaching the atheist doctrine. When the economic state of the country seemed to be heading towards disaster, the New Economic Policy was implemented; it brought a temporary relaxation of these initiatives. Hopes for reconstruction even interested some of the Mennonites. Two organizations were involved in the Mennonite reaction, the *Verband Buerger hollaendischer Herkunft* (VBHH) representing the 60,000 Mennonites in Ukraine, and the *Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirtschafts Verein* (AMLV) covering the Mennonites of all other regions of Russia. Two German language papers were begun, *Unser Blatt* in Ukraine, and *Der Praktische Landwirt* as a publication of the AMLV.

Even while the New Economic Policy was in effect, the State Planning Commission was drafting strategy for the first Five-Year Plan. This plan was to come into operation at the end of 1928, but unofficially was begun in 1925-1926. There were increasing restrictions on religious freedom, and ever decreasing exemption from military service. The VBHH (1926) and the AMLV (1928) were dissolved by government action, and as early as the spring of 1926 it was becoming increasingly difficult to secure passports to leave the country. With additional roadblocks for departure only 847 Mennonites reached Canada in 1927, and 511 in 1928.

The first Five-Year Plan was officially introduced on 1 October 1928. The objectives most affecting the Mennonites were collectivization of the land, renewed attacks on religion, continued government control of the schools with the indoctrination that entailed. Those who owned land or businesses were declared *kulaks*, and were totally disenfranchised or sent into exile. Now almost all Mennonites felt that they had no future in the Soviet Union. Requests for help poured in to people such as Benjamin Unruh in Germany, David Toews in Canada and to the Mennonite Central Committee.

In desperation 29 families, largely from Siberia, fled to Moscow in November of 1928 and



The Red Gate to freedom on the border
with Latvia

early 1929. They moved into housing in the Moscow suburbs, spending most of their last rubles on bread and rent. They worked at getting their passports for six months, with great perseverance. Likely to get rid of these very insistent refugees the government granted the necessary documents! Those who passed the medical examination were free to go to Canada, the rest were detained in Hamburg. One of the leaders of this group was Peter Bernhard Epp. Peter G Smidovitch, the government official who granted the passports, warned that it was unlikely that additional passports would be issued. They left Moscow on 30 August 1929.

News of the 29 families spread like wildfire. Other Mennonites felt that it was probably their only chance of escape. They came from Siberia (as far away as the Amur region), the Crimea, the Caucasus, the Kuban, Molotschna, Sagradovka, Memrik, Alt and Neu Samara, Am Trakt and Ufa. They found housing in the Moscow suburbs of Perlovka, Tayninka, Klyazma, and Pushkino. Many also found temporary housing in summer villas, and some even camped in surrounding forests. On 18 September 1929 there were 250 families, about 1,000 persons in the environs of Moscow. Ten days later there were 400 families, a week later 600.

Peter Fast described the long trek to Moscow. "People would sell their belongings at public auction sales and then leave, not knowing whether they had any chance of successfully leaving the country. But with nothing to lose and everything to gain there was but one choice. Soon auction sales were declared unlawful and detachments of mounted police were patrolling the countryside to disperse the crowds...In desperation whole groups of families fled secretly by night, leaving all they owned..." In time at least 13,000 (some say up to 15,000) refugees flocked to Moscow, including many Mennonites, but also Lutherans, Catholics, and even a few Baptists and Greek Orthodox Russians.

German and American journalists visited the refugees and promised to draw the attention of the world to this tragedy. On 10 October 1929 B H Unruh, through the Soviet Embassy in Berlin, asked for permission to investigate. Permission was denied, but a government commission was appointed, which recommended that all the refugees should be allowed to emigrate. On 19 October the German Embassy received the information that, provided another country was



Benjamin Unruh

willing to accept them, refugees could leave the Soviet Union. All of them wanted to go to Canada, but Canada was reluctant to accept additional immigrants. Germany at the time was in no economic condition to help.

The Soviets were now ready to send up to 1,000 refugees via Leningrad to Hamburg. Without a favourable decision by the government of Canada, however, neither the Canadian Pacific Railway nor Germany were willing to proceed. In the meantime the Soviets were threatening to send the refugees back to their homes or into exile. One group of 324 for some



Cartoon in the Toronto Mail and Empire of 27 November 1929

reason had already departed from Moscow and arrived in Kiel, Germany, on 3 November, where they were lodged temporarily. On 4 November Unruh continued his negotiations with the German government in Berlin. He also asked the German Mennonite and Evangelical churches for help. Through the newly formed *Brueder in Not* (Brethren in Need) relief agency an appeal was made to the whole German nation, "in spite of our difficult economic situation (we ask) for an offering for the afflicted brethren."

Reich President von Hindenburg donated 250,000 Reichsmark, and 6,000,000 Reichsmark were appropriated by the Reich cabinet for the rescue. Other agencies and individuals also contributed.

In the meantime the government of Canada gave its final negative answer on 25 November, basically sentencing thousands of people to hardship and death. It is likely that some element of ethno-centrism played a part in this decision - English speaking refugees were preferred!



On arrival in Riga the Moscow refugees prayed and sang *Nun danket Alle Gott*



Refugees served hot soup in Riga

German generosity and hospitality stepped in and allowed at least temporary refuge to a number of those in Moscow. Between December 1 and 11, a total of 5,671 were admitted to that country. Of these 3,885 were Mennonites, 1,260 Lutherans, 468 Catholics and 51 Baptists. Including births, those who escaped by other means, and other close relatives who were allowed to leave, the total eventually came to 6,278 persons. They travelled via Riga, where they paused at least long enough to express their thanks to God in prayer, to sing "*Nun danket alle Gott*" (Now thank we all our God), and to have a steaming hot bowl of soup. They were then sent to three camps in Germany.

After previous warnings the Soviet government, through the GPU (the secret police), was beginning to send the remaining refugees back. Under torture the men were forced to sign documents that they went "voluntarily." More than 300 had already been arrested and sent into exile.

Heinrich Martens graphically described the conditions and consequences. The women and children were thrown onto trucks, loaded onto freight cars, then shipped back. Stations they were "shipped" from were Pushkino, Mytishchi, Bossino and Ostrovskaya. Many children suffered broken arms and legs from the brute force used. Pregnant women gave birth on pavements or on trucks, and both mother and child often died within hours. Many families were torn asunder. About 8,000 people were sent back. The trip back to the Crimea took nine days, to Siberia about three weeks, through the bitter cold. Many people died on the way. At one station the bodies of 37

children were taken from the train, at another Siberian station the count of bodies was 60. Those who were sent “home” arrived there with nothing to eat, and no roof over their heads, and no employment. Others were sent into exile either to the far north or to Siberia, where many of them will have died.



A meeting at the Moelln camp

(surprisingly) 1,344, Argentina 5, Mexico 4, USA 4, and 458 stayed in Europe. By November 1932 there were only 70 persons left in the camp at Moelln.

With the aid of the German government as well as the Dutch Mennonites, migration to Brazil was made possible. This country did not guarantee nonresistant status, so the Mennonites who chose Brazil tended to be those who considered this a principle of marginal importance. The first group of 33 families sailed to Brazil on the *Monte Olivia* on 16 January 1930. They settled on land in the upper Kraul River valley near the German city of Blumenau. Eventually 2,529 Moscow refugee Mennonites settled in Brazil.



School at the Prenzlau camp

Of those refugees going to Paraguay, the first group crossed the ocean on a German vessel *Bayern*, then transferred to a river boat in Buenos Aires. After travelling some distance up the Paraguay River they disembarked at Puerto Casada, then were transported by railway for 145 kilometres. This was followed by a 100 kilometre trek westwards deeper into the Paraguayan Chaco, on oxcarts provided by the Menno Colony. They established the Fernheim Colony, consisting of 13 villages, with Filadelfia laid out as the administrative centre. Those who went to Canada were quite easily assimilated into existing Mennonite settlements and farms.

Those refugees who had been allowed into Germany were taken to three camps, in Hammerstein, Moelln and Prenzlau. Many started their sojourn by celebrating Christmas in the new, if somewhat crowded circumstances. Kindergartens were established, as well as schools, Sunday Schools, choirs, libraries, and even sewing classes. In time the refugees left for various destinations: Brazil 2,529, Paraguay 1,572, Canada

Die Mennonitische Rundschau

1877 Tasset uns fleißig sein zu halten die Einheit im Geist.

1930

53. Jahrgang.

Winnipeg, Man., den 5. Februar 1930.

Nummer 6.

Das Gewissen.

Gott hat zwar dem Menschen die Freiheit gegeben.
Sich selbst zu gestalten das irdische Leben,
Doch mahnt er verständig mit leisem Wort
Den, der vom geraden Wege geht fort;
Die göttliche Stimme gibt ihm keine Ruh,
Fortwährend räumt sie dem Irrenden zu:
„Halt ein, Kind, bedenke, daß nach diesem Leben
Von deinem Tun Du mußt Rechenschaft geben,
Denn trachte jetzt, dereinst in Ehren
zu steh'n,
Statt bitterlich weinend von binnen
zu geh'n.“

So baut nun verständig, und Gott möge walten
Daß ihr euer Leben so möget gestalten,
Daß, dereinst in Ehren vor Ihm ihr könnt steh'n
Und nicht müß den Weg der Verirrten geh'n;
Daß jeder mit offenem, heiterem Blick
Kann sagen: „Herr, hier bring' das Pfund ich zurück,
Daß Du mir in Liebe hast anvertraut.
Ich hab's treu verwaltet und gut aufgebaut.“
Laut wird dann der himmlische Jubelruf tönen:
„Heil ward euch, ihr Sieger! Der Herr wird euch krönen!“

Die Gemeinde zu Sardes.

Offenbarung 3, 1-6.

in welcher es mit Ananias und seinem Weibe Saphira ein so trauriges Ende nahm (Apg. 5.)

Den Heberwindern zu Sardes gibt der Herr Jesus herrliche Verheißungen: Sie sollen in der Vollendung mit weißen Kleidern angetan (verstärkt) werden; ihr Name wird nicht aus dem Buche des Lebens ausgelöscht werden, und an seinem Tage will er ihren Namen bekennen vor seinem Vater und vor seinen Engeln.

„Wer Ehre hat, der höre, was der Geist den Gemeinden sagt.“

N. W. Reimer.

Warum geben wir nicht mehr für die Arbeit des Herrn?

In meinem ersten Schreiben über dieses Thema, vor ein paar Monaten, bat ich, daß auch andere über dieses wichtige Thema schreiben möchten. Ich wünschte, daß wir uns gegenseitig aufmuntern möchten in liebevoller, brüderlicher Weise, und recht vielseitig diese Sache besprechen.

Es muß doch etwas getan werden

Laut brieflicher Nachricht aus Rußland sind in Moskau erschossen:

† Ältester Dörffen, Arkadak
† Krebiger Johann Löws, Ignatjewka,
† Ältester Jakob Kempel, Grünfeld,
† Ein weiterer, dessen Namen nicht genannt ist.

Eine spätere Nachricht besagt, daß auch

† Ältester Heinrich Funk, New York, Ignatjewka, mein gewesener Lehrer erschossen ist, Frau und wohl 6 kleine Kinder hinterlassend.

Der Herr tröste, helfe und erbarme sich.

holen wir den Samen; noch einmal wird der Boden gelockert, und dann der Same hineingesät. Sanft und leise decken wir die Saat an und mar-

Further investigation showed that this grim story, framed in black, was not quite accurate, but still not happy news. The victims may well have wished that they had been shot!

Elder David Doerksen of Arkadak was arrested and jailed in Moscow, presumably because he was considered a leader advocating migration. Sent into exile into the far north. Not heard from again

Minister Johann Toews was arrested in Moscow 11 November 1929 and taken to the Butyrka State Prison. After five months of torture he was sentenced to five years at a concentration camp. He died 21 February 1933 of a heart condition (see biography for details)

Elder Jakob Aron Rempel of Gruenfeld was arrested in Moscow 1 December 1929, and taken to the Lubyanka Prison, then to the dreaded Butyrka State Prison. He was tortured, then in time sentenced to ten years in exile. He escaped in 1932, but was eventually recaptured in 1936. He was executed 11 September 1941 (see biography for details)

Elder Heinrich Heinrich Funk of New York, Ignatyev Colony, was arrested 4 November 1929, at his home (not in Moscow). He was sentenced to eight years' exile in the North. He was released after eight and one half years, but was arrested again in 1940. It is assumed that he died soon after arriving in the concentration camp (see biography for details)

JOHANN JOHANN TOEWS (1878-1933)

Johann Johann Toews was born 25 June 1878 in Fabrikerwiese, Molotschna. He was the second oldest of six children of Minister Johann Aron Toews. He had an older brother Jakob Johann Toews who was born in 1875, and a younger brother Wilhelm Johann Toews, who subsequently wrote a brief biography of Johann. Three sisters died during the Revolution. The family moved to Muntau, Molotschna, and that is where Johann had his elementary education. He completed *Zentralschule* in neighbouring Halbstadt as well as *Lehrerseminar*. He obtained his qualifications as teacher by passing his examinations in Berdyansk. Johann's father and mother both died in the autumn of 1898.

Johann married Susanna Wiens in the summer of 1898. She was born in Ladekopp 21 November 1873 (and was therefore five years older than Johann). Johann and Susanna had nine children, of whom only two survived, Peter and Wilhelm (Willibald). Their eldest son, Johann, died as a youth during the Revolution. The couple also adopted a girl Euphrosine (Frosya).

Johann was appointed as teacher in the Molotschna village of Friedensdorf. After teaching 13 years he wrote an article published in the *Odessaer Zeitung* under the pseudonym *Ich und Abdera*. This was a humorous attempt to point out some of the foibles of Mennonite society. Many thought it was a clever bit of writing, even one of the members of the school board said, "One has to take our hat off for that young man." But the village authorities were not amused. When they found out who the author was, Johann was fired.



Johann Toews as *Sanitaeter*
during World War I

It is likely that Johann interrupted his teaching career to serve in the *Sanitaetsdienst* during World War I, spending some of the time in Ekaterinoslav. He was 20 years older than some of the more junior members of the corps. At that time he was already a spiritual leader, and conducted weekly Bible studies for the *Sanitaeter*.

Since, particularly after the publication of his article, attention was drawn to Johann's ability in the spiritual sphere, he was elected as minister and ordained in the Mennonite Church of Petershagen. Somewhat stifled by the formality in that church, he and his wife transferred to the Mennonite Brethren in 1908, where his spiritual gifts found freer expression.

Johann furthered his academic qualifications and received some offers to teach at the *Zentralschule* level. In 1909 he accepted an appointment at the Nikolyevka *Zentralschule* located in the Ignatyev Colony, where he taught Religion and German language. The following year he passed further teaching examinations in Kharkov. Johann had particular joy for the work as minister and elder, and later leading Bible-study courses. His work among the youth seemed to be particularly successful. In subsequent years the family continued to reside in Nilolyevka.



Johann Toews at the height
of his career

Johann also served the wider Mennonite constituency. He was a delegate at the All-Ukrainian Mennonite General Conference held in Melitopol 2-9 October 1926. The executive elected at the conference consisted of Jakob Rempel of Gruenfeld, Johann Toews of Ignatyev, Peter Nickel of Ohrloff and Jakob Paetkau of Memrik. Johann also delivered one of the keynote addresses, titled "*Ueber die Hebung des geistlichen Lebens in den Gemeinden* (Building up spiritual life in the churches)." This address was published in its entirety in *Unser Blatt*, and later included in the A H Unruh history of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

With an increasing number of Mennonites migrating to Canada, Johann also considered the option, but decided his responsibility lay "to stay with the flock." By 1927, however, the work was so hampered by government pressure, with Johann under constant surveillance and periodically called in for intense interrogation, that the family tried to leave, but was refused exit visas. Despite difficulties, Johann continued his ministry. It was commented that "the Lord blessed his wide-reaching work, especially in the last two years of his ministry." When thousands of Mennonites streamed to Moscow in 1929 in an attempt to leave the country, Johann and his family also went. In Moscow everything seemed to be arranged, but it was noted that the surveillance of this uncompromising witness had not stopped. On 11 November 1929 Johann was arrested and jailed in the dreaded Butyrka State Prison.

Wife Susanna and the three children were allowed to leave the Soviet Union, and by January 1930 were residing in the Hammerstein Refugee Camp in Germany. Son Peter wrote a letter to the *Mennonitische Rundschau* asking for addresses, since when the police had arrested Johann, they had also taken their address book! The family and other authorities tried without success to free Johann, but eventually had to leave for Brazil without their husband and father.

Johann in the meantime was accused of being a counter-revolutionary, an agitator for the movement to leave the country as well as having illegal contact with the outside world. After eight months of torture and filthy squalor at Butyrka, he was sentenced to five years at a concentration camp. He lived in crowded barracks, together with lice and bed-bugs, until October 1931. For a while circumstances improved when he lived with a Russian family. Despite the protests of the



Johann Toews in exile

camp doctor he was moved 45 verst into the deep forest where, despite heart disease, he was expected to fell trees with axe and saw. Snow was often very deep, and hands and feet froze despite warm boots and mitts. He was, of course, given no food, so his friends had to help. When eventually his condition deteriorated to the extent that he could not work, he was fully "retired" and then transferred to Kornilovka, near the right bank of the Dvina River in northern Russia. With him in this facility was David D Paetkau, elder of the Mennonite Brethren Church of Orenburg. Even there it seems he was offered freedom if he would renounce his faith - but the martyr would hear nothing of it. Despite the steady deterioration of his body through suffering, "his spirit was renewed every day through his fellowship with God."

Johann's heart condition worsened in early 1933. On 29 January 1933 he started a letter to friend F P Barga, added a few words with unsteady hand on 5 February, "Have become sick, but do not be disturbed, to God be the honor - your Hans." Then barely

legible "Period. Heart disease. Brother Paetkau will report everything." Johann Johann Toews died on 21 February 1933 in a prison camp. Fellow prisoners Elder David Paetkau and a Mohammedan priest carried his body deep into the pine forest and buried him there.

Johann was a remarkable man. Besides his specific church work he was also a poet. Some of his poetry was published before he was arrested, for example in *Unser Blatt*, but he also composed further lines during his time of banishment. Historian J A Toews penned a fitting epitaph for this dedicated servant of God: "His letters and poems bear an eloquent testimony to the depth of his faith and his commitment to Christ."

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Letters:

8 January 1930, p 7: from son Peter and wife Susanna, written to a brother of Johann, probably Wilhelm, who lived in Mountain Lake, Minnesota

12 February 1930, pp 1, 2, list of people arrested, and list of refugees in camp

News Item: 5 February 1930, five Mennonite leaders listed as having been executed in Moscow, including Minister Johann Toews. Actually later information on four is that they were arrested at the time, then exiled

Obituary: 26 February 1930. Again the news of his death was premature. This account states that Johann moved to the Memrik Colony in 1908, living in the village Bahndorf

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ELDER JAKOB ARON REMPEL
(1883-1941)

Jakob Aron Rempel was born 9 April 1883 in Heuboden, Borozenko Colony, South Russia. He was the eldest of 13 children of Aron Aron Rempel and Justina Peters. His parents were farmers; his father built a flour mill, but the business went bankrupt, so the children were hired out as labourers. During the time that Jakob was in elementary school the family moved from place to place, disrupting his education. To this was added some eye trouble, making studying difficult. He was, however, a good student, a logical thinker. His home situation was not particularly helpful, although his mother was a good influence. After completion of elementary school, likely at the age of 12 or 13, he worked as a stable hand for about three years. He studied on the side, being coached by the village school teacher, Mr Kehler.

Mennonites were to be model farmers in some Jewish villages in the area (*Judenplan*); in these villages the Mennonites organized private schools for their own children. These schools were not always particular about the qualifications of the school teachers. With joy and enthusiasm Jakob taught in one of these schools, in Rapetten, for two years.

Thereafter a teaching position was available in the Orenburg Colony, but here full qualifications were required. Jakob went to the city of Orenburg to obtain private instructions from a *Gymnasium* teacher. After this he passed his elementary teaching exams, and taught in Neuhorst, Chortitza Colony for one year.

Johann J Thiessen, wealthy mill owner from Ekaterinoslav, was willing to provide funds to send the young teacher to *Predigerschule* in Basel, Switzerland. Once in Basel Jakob was in his element, and learned very quickly. He expanded his scope by attending the University of Basel, majoring in philosophy and history. In time he started to teach at the *Predigerschule*, Church History and Greek. He had arrived in Basel in 1906 and by 1912 he only required a dissertation to complete his doctorate. However, he heard that his mother was not well, so he elected to return home to Russia. By the time he reached home his mother had died.

Jakob had also at the same time been offered a position at the Chortitza *Zentralschule*, which he gladly accepted. On 30 January 1912 he wrote, "I now have the hope to again be involved in public life...to have the youth around me...to portray the stories of our forefathers in the struggle for inner life and love..." He continued in this position for three years.

It was through a colleague that he met Maria Sudermann, daughter of wealthy estate owner Johann Sudermann. They were married on the family estate Belenkoye on 10 June 1914. Jakob and Maria had two children:

1. Alexander - born 26 May 1915 in Chortitza, Chortitza
2. Eleonore - born 20 March 1918 in Nikolaifeld, Yazykovo Colony

Soon after, still in the summer of 1914, Jakob was elected to the ministry and ordained in the Neu-



Jakob Rempel in his student days
in Basel, about 1911

Chortitza Church.



Jakob Rempel in the 1920s

In 1915 Jakob started teaching in a *Kommerzschule* at Yusovka, and in 1916 he began a new position in a *Gymnasium* in Nikopol. In the spring of 1918 Jakob was hired as assistant professor of German at the Mining Institute of Ekaterinoslav, and as lecturer at the newly founded university. As the family was preparing to move to Ekaterinoslav, Maria suddenly became ill. She died three days later, on 19 August 1918, part of the ravages of the world-wide influenza epidemic.

In Ekaterinoslav he continued his academic work, but was also leading minister of the Mennonite congregation. Despite the terror of the Civil War on all sides, the city, for example, changing hands 19 times, Jakob completed a three-volume German grammar textbook for students in Russian colleges. On the basis of this work he was appointed professor of German Studies at Ekaterinoslav, but also at the University of Moscow. At the same time he was elected as elder by the Neu-Chortitza Church after he held a series of meetings there. He was elected in 1919, then confirmed as elder on 2 May 1920 by Elder Isaak Gerhard Dyck. The congregation was distributed in 14 villages; in time the total reached 20 villages. Jakob had a choice to make - the university appointment, or to function as a teacher and elder in the church. He chose the church. The university appointment was rescinded. The three-volume German grammar was banned.

While Jakob later declared that his love for Maria was of "undiminished intensity," he married her younger sister Sophie (Sonya) Sudermann on 10 March 1921. It appears that about this time the Rempels likely moved to Gruenfeld, Borozenko Colony. Jakob and Sophie had five children:

3. Paul - born 19 June 1923 in Gruenfeld
4. Peter - born 11 September 1924 in Gruenfeld
5. Ernst - born 8 November 1925 in Gruenfeld
6. Martha - born 13 December 1927 in Gruenfeld
7. Magdalena - born 23 July 1930 in Zentral, died five weeks later 30 August 1930, also in Zentral

After his decision of 1920 Jakob exerted all energies to serve his local congregations, but also the wider Mennonite constituency. At a general conference of Mennonites held in Chortitza 11-12 October 1922, he was elected chairman of the *Kommission fuer Kirchenangelegenheiten* (KfK). This involved many different negotiations with the government. He was involved with the preparation for, and chaired the General Conference of Mennonites held in Moscow 13-18 January 1925. At the conference he resigned as chairman of the KfK, but he was appointed to establish a Ministers Training Seminary, and to be its first head. Jakob was elected as chairman of the All-Ukrainian Conference of Representatives of Mennonite Churches held in Melitopol 5-9 October 1926. This turned out to be the last major conference held by Mennonites in Russia. He reported there about the Mennonite World Conference he had attended in Basel, Switzerland in 1925.

Despite massive migration from Neu-Chortitza to Canada in 1923, Jakob stayed, feeling that he had an obligation to the church. During this time he was summoned to Moscow for lengthy



The Rempel family in Gruenfeld in 1926

interrogations on at least two occasions, May and November 1924. Jakob Rempel and Benjamin Unruh were sent as representatives of the Russian Mennonites to the celebration of the 400-year anniversary of the founding of Anabaptism in Switzerland in 1925. Jakob was actually refused entry into Switzerland, but interacted with a number of delegates at the border, and spent three months visiting and ministering to Mennonite churches in Germany. He published an extensive report of his experiences in Germany through the pages of the periodical, *Unser Blatt*.

Back in Russia he organized and participated in *Bibelbesprechungen* and seminars for ministers; he held a *Predigerwoche* 22-27 November 1925.

The Mennonites appeared to have received government permission to open a seminary to train ministers. Jakob, the proposed head, was actually preparing to move to Ohrloff, Molotschna, to implement the plans. In 1927 the government refused to honour its promise. With the church unable to support his family, and the proposed school not being realized, Jakob felt it might be an option to migrate to Canada. The request was denied 16 July 1928. He continued to serve his church and the wider denomination with trips to Zentral, Arkadark, Orenburg and Neu Samara.

The Communist government, sometimes through the village council it controlled, was making Jakob's work increasingly difficult. Heavy taxes were imposed which the Rempels could not possibly pay. Jakob had a "hearing" 7 September 1929, then he and the family were banned from their home on 8 September 1929. First Jakob, then his family moved to Moscow in the autumn of 1929.

On 1 December 1929 Jakob was arrested at night and taken to the Lubyanka Prison, then to the dreaded Butyrka State Prison. He was tortured, and had many long periods of interrogation. The Communists hoped to have Jakob renounce his faith, or at least sign a paper that he was "voluntarily" returning home. On 9 June 1930 he was sentenced to ten years in exile. He was sent to the Solovetsky Prison Camp just north of Leningrad.

In the meantime, the family was sent to Zentral, Sophie with her six children. The seventh child, Magdalena, was born in Zentral, but died five weeks later.

Jakob's first job at the prison camp was felling trees, but his seven-month starvation diet and torture caused him to collapse. He then was given the lighter task of working in the prison pharmacy, then as bookkeeper, and finally as teacher for the children of secret police agents employed at the camp. A strange deal was struck, in that Jakob was not forced to teach anti-religious dogma, and the parents promised not to report him for this "misdemeanor."

In the spring of 1931 Jakob was transferred south to Alma Ata in southern Kazakhstan, then to Karaganda. While being transferred he jumped off the train near Issyl Kul on 24 January 1932, escaping custody. He ate nothing but snow for three days, then eventually found a cousin of his who lived in the area. She and her husband nursed him back to health after Jakob suffered from typhus,

and also helped him to get fake identification papers. For the next four years he lived as a fugitive. He tried several times to escape from the country, southward into Persia, but each time was caught. During this time he managed to contact his family, who by now lived in Einlage, Chortitza Colony. His son Alexander found him, noting that he was physically and mentally exhausted. He had no fingernails, a sign of the tortures he had undergone during his time in prison. The winter of 1934-1935 was spent in Ak Metchet, living among Mennonites in reasonably comfortable circumstances. Exercising extreme caution not to be seen by the neighbours, he did have two brief visits with his wife Sophie and family in Einlage.

Father and son Alexander were arrested in March of 1936. On 18 April 1937 Jakob was sentenced to be shot; this was commuted to a ten-year prison sentence on 16 May 1937. The prison sentence was to be served at a prison in the Orel region. He was able to write some letters to his family; on 27 January 1939 he was reported to be *geisteskrank* (mentally disturbed). Letters to the family urged them to escape out of the Soviet Union; the last communication to the family was dated 12 June 1941. He reminisced about the past, and expressed his worry about his wife Sonya (Sophie).

With the German advance into Russia in 1941, and the paranoia of Lavrenty Beria, Minister of the Interior, orders went out that the spies and counter-revolutionaries in the Orel prison were to be executed. The sentences were handed out on 8 September, and the executions carried out on 11 September 1941. Of the 161 receiving the death sentence, 157 were subsequently shot in the Medvedevskiy Les Forest. Jakob Aron Rempel was number 123. The bodies were buried in specially dug holes, with trees planted on top of them, presumably to hide the grim reality of what had occurred.

The family, including Alexander, eventually was able to escape to Germany with the retreating army; they then migrated to Canada. Alexander had collected materials, including many letters Jakob had written, to fulfill a promise made to his father, to let the family and the world know what had happened. Alexander died of a heart attack before he completed the task, but his niece, Amalie Enns, daughter of Eleonore, carried the task to its conclusion. "Hope is Our Deliverance" is the story of *Aeltester Jakob Aron Rempel*, "The tragic experience of a Mennonite leader and his family in Stalin's Russia."



Jakob as a fugitive in Central Asia in 1932

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HEINRICH HEINRICH FUNK (1880-1941?)

Heinrich Heinrich Funk was born in Neuenberg, Chortitza Colony, 29 December 1880. His parents were Heinrich Funk and Katharina Friesen. He was a twin with his brother Peter, in a family which had eight sons and three daughters. His parents were considered to be devout, and despite being poor, valued education. Heinrich experienced a happy childhood. After completing the *Dorfschule* both Heinrich and Peter were urged by their teacher to attend *Zentralschule*. It involved considerable sacrifice by the parents, but in time five of the eight sons attended *Zentralschule*. Heinrich and Peter were the first young people from Neuenberg to have gone on to have further education. The Funk family was very close-knit, and valued fellowship with each other. There was a sense of order in the family as well as a strong work ethic.

During his third year at *Zentralschule* Heinrich had a severe cold, which settled in his lungs. As a result he was unable to participate in many of the activities associated with youth. This had a significant impact on his life, making him more aware of the difficulties of the sick and lonely.

After completion of *Zentralschule* the twins struck off in different directions. With the support of the constituency Heinrich was able to go a theological institute in Basel, Switzerland, while Peter studied in a *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav to train as a lawyer. Despite the different paths they had taken there was frequent letter contact; none of the brothers made important decisions without having discussed it with the others.

Heinrich did well in his studies. He appreciated the beauty of the Alps, he was well liked by fellow students, and developed relationships which had a positive influence on him. Benjamin Unruh was one of his classmates, and a good friend. The climate change, the different way of life and the complete satisfaction of the work helped him to recover his health, so that after completion of his studies, he returned home a healthy young man. He was now prepared to accept a position in a secondary school teaching Religion and German Language. Since no such position was immediately available he was appointed as senior teacher in the village of Schoenhorst.

Soon, however, a new *Zentralschule* was opened up in New York, of the Ignatyev Colony. Heinrich was appointed as teacher of Religion and German Language, a position he held for almost 20 years. His wishes had been fulfilled; he had achieved his goal. Here he also learned to know Sonya (Susanna) Rempel. After they were married, they had a cheerful home, both having pleasing personalities. Susanna had a lively way of managing the household activities.

The couple had four children, two daughters and two sons:

1. Herta - trained as a teacher, married a Mennonite, husband exiled, lived in Leningrad for some time, refugee, escaped to Germany



Susanna Rempel and Heinrich Funk on their wedding day

2. Elsa - became a teacher, was married to a staunch Mennonite, her husband was exiled, died in 1938

3. Son

4. Heinrich (Heinz) -

Heinrich was elected as minister of the Mennonite Church in the region. He continued to distinguish himself with enthusiastic teaching of German literature and presenting thoughtful sermons. Family life was somewhat disturbed when Heinrich went into service during World War I, either the *Sanitaetsdiest* or the *Forsteidiest*, but after the war he returned to his teaching and ministerial responsibilities. The leader of the church, Elder Abraham Unrau, was old and in poor health, so Heinrich was elected to be his assistant. During this time Heinrich experienced very much, most of it very difficult. He



Founders and teachers of the New York *Zentralschule*.
Heinrich Funk is second from the right, front row



The Funk family in New York, Ignatyev, 1 to r: Herta, Else,
a son, Susanna and Heinrich

was arrested a number of times, on some occasions spending several days in prison. Eventually the Soviet authorities gave him a choice: he could remain as teacher, but would have to completely

refrain from all ministerial functions, or if he insisted on remaining a minister he would lose his job as teacher. He chose to remain a minister. He felt that as of 1925 the teachers were required to teach antireligious propaganda, which made it impossible for him to continue, despite his love for children and of the profession. During this time he fully accepted the work and was elected elder, since Abraham Unrau's age and health forced him to retire completely. Also during this time Herta and Else were going to school. After four years of training in a pedagogical school, Herta was

any employment.

During the mid-1920s a large portion of the church membership migrated to Canada, so the question was also before the Funk family. Heinrich elected to stay, to continue to be the shepherd of those people remaining. Eventually, however, the circumstances became so difficult, and the likelihood of continued church life so remote, that the Funks decided on migration in 1929. Heinrich was able to obtain the exit documents, and the date of departure was set for 4 November by train. Several hours before they left, with baggage at the station, hand luggage prepared, the family visited the neighbours for a final supper and farewell. The house was already locked. Heinrich was tired from work on the last few days, so he lay down for a rest. Then the police appeared. They searched through all their belongings, including Heinrich's papers. Heinrich was arrested and taken away; he was sent from the village on the same train the family had intended to board. The family returned to their own empty house, their furniture having been auctioned off at very low prices.

Heinrich was taken to a prison in the Artemovsk Region, where he was in a warm cell with three others. Every week he received a food package from his family; after nine weeks Susanna was able to visit him, finding conditions to be quite satisfactory. When he came to trial in February 1930, he was sentenced to eight years exile in the north. The crime he was accused of was advocating immigration, as illustrated by his own desire to migrate. Because of his previous lung problems the family worried about Heinrich's health.

Eleven months after his imprisonment wife Susanna was able to visit Heinrich in his concentration camp. She found that, because of his health, he was given lighter work, and received fairly good care. What struck her in particular was his strong faith in God. Susanna wrote "...But Heinrich has a strong faith; I was astounded, wondered at and was happy." In every letter he wrote Heinrich included encouraging Bible verses for those whom he was concerned about. Bible passages he referred to were: Psalm 1, 2, 23, 46, 90, 91, 121, 126, Matthew 11:28 and John 11:40.

Heinrich also wrote to relatives in Canada, including his mother-in-law. In particular he thanked for all the prayers they were offering on his behalf. Despite the bitterness of the exile he could still see that he had experienced God's help in the situation. In time circumstances worsened. Because of poor nutrition Heinrich developed scurvy, with swollen joints, particularly his elbows and knees. He was transferred to a camp 600 kilometres further north. Despite his difficulties he was still able to write poetry, expressing his longing to see his dear ones.

It took some time for the news of wife Susanna's death to reach Heinrich. Part of the funeral service was described, "...when the sun was setting many wreaths were decorating the new grave mound, around which the abandoned children cowered. The heart of the small lad Heinz was breaking, and he had to be taken away almost by force..." The family then had to manage without the central focus of either parent. Both daughters married without the blessings of either parents. In the meantime, towards the end of his term, Heinrich was assigned to an American geological survey team and travelled extensively in northern Soviet Union. His health returned.

After seven and a half years Heinrich was released, to go back to his home. But it was an empty gesture. Susanna was not there to greet him, and his children were spread across the country, so for some time he stayed with a niece, Anna Janzen. In time he travelled the far distance to be with his second oldest daughter, Else, who had a teaching position in central Asia. She had been married to a good Mennonite man, but he had been executed. Through her influence Heinrich obtained a position as secretary in the school where she taught. But no sooner had he regained his

strength, and felt quite content, when Else died in 1938. She likely had a fever, influenza, and died despite good medical care. Heinrich then travelled to be with his eldest daughter, Herta, who lived in Leningrad. In 1940 Heinrich was again arrested and exiled, together with three of his brothers, Peter (the lawyer), Johann (Hans) and Gerhard. They were apparently banished to a concentration camp situated on an island, presumably in the far north. Since Heinrich was in poor condition to start with, it is assumed that he did not live long after his second period of exile began.

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PETER FRANZ FROESE
(1892-1957)

Peter Franz Froese was born 31 January 1892, probably in the Memrik Colony. His father was a Mennonite Brethren minister in the Kotlyarevka-Memrik MB Church, listed as such in 1905. Peter went to the village school, then probably by the age of 12 or 13 accepted Christ as his saviour, was baptized and joined the Mennonite Brethren Church. He had a younger brother Johann (Vanya), who worked in the Menno Centre in Moscow, and a brother Franz. He also had a sister who married a Friesen; she had a son Andreas who also worked in the Menno Centre. Johann, Franz and Andreas later were arrested and exiled.

For further education Peter went to the three class Ohrloff *Zentralschule*, where a classmate, likely for two years, was Cornelius C Funk, who was initially from Tiege. Cornelius claimed that they actually sat on the same school bench. Probably instructing Peter were three excellent teachers who were at the school at the time, Johann J Braeul, Johann J Janzen and Salomon Ediger. Peter and Cornelius became good friends and often discussed spiritual matters; this probably helped Cornelius in his religious convictions, since he too then was baptized and joined the Mennonite Brethren Church.

After completing *Zentralschule* Peter studied engineering at the University of St Petersburg. Here he met Cornelius F Classen, who also went to St Petersburg to study. Before he had finished his courses World War I began, and Peter was drafted into the *Sanitaetsdienst*, likely in November 1914. He was initially stationed in Moscow, but then served on a hospital train which was sent to the Polish front, near the war zone at Station Zechanov. Peter supervised the office at their camp, and asked Cornelius Funk, who happened to be on the same train, to be his assistant. Not only did they do medical work, but a number of men, including Peter and Cornelius, conducted Bible studies.

After the abdication of the Czar on 13 March 1917, and the establishment of the Kerensky government, Peter together with a number of other men moved to Moscow, and established a Mennonite association called *Mennobshtschestvo*. They attempted to represent Mennonite interests as agencies of the new government in Moscow developed various policies.

An All-Russian Mennonite Congress held in Ohrloff in August, 1917, was attended by 141 delegates. Peter Froese represented the *Sanitaeter*, and Cornelius Klassen the *Forsteidiens*. Salomon Ediger opened the congress, describing the political turmoil in Russia. Economic policies and the question of land redistribution were discussed. According to Klassen "the debate at the congress focused on the relationship of Christianity to socialism, with Froese taking the position that 'Christianity is certainly closer to socialism than it is to capitalism, even though Christianity and socialism are not to be considered identical.' He finally agreed with the majority of the congress



Cornelius Funk and Peter Froese during their service as *Sanitaeter* on the Polish front in 1916

that for the time being private land ownership was best, but was not so sure that this would always be the case.”

Peter then returned to Moscow, to the small room he occupied in the Red Cross warehouse. Cornelius Klassen joined him there. At a meeting of the forestry and medical orderlies held in Moscow, Peter and Cornelius were asked to approach the Kerensky government to affect the release of 37 Mennonite medical orderlies who had been imprisoned as spies. They were successful in these negotiations.

The “United Council of Religious Brotherhoods and Groups” obtained official recognition from the government in January of 1919. These were followers and friends of Tolstoy; Lenin himself had helped to clear the path for recognition through the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party. Peter and Cornelius joined this group, and were elected to the executive board. Through this organization they helped in the trials of young men who refused military service. In time this Council was, of course, dissolved by the Bolsheviks. In July of 1920 representatives of many of the Mennonite colonies outside of Ukraine met in Davlekanovo, Ufa. The “Menno Centre” was established in Moscow to look after the interests of Mennonites from eastern Russia. The representatives of the Ural and the Siberian Mennonite colonies elected Peter and Cornelius to plead their causes in Moscow.

In 1921 an All-Russian Relief Committee was organized under the chairmanship of Leo Kamenev. Peter and Cornelius were chosen as members of the committee; this seemed to be a good legal basis for much of their work. In mid August of 1921, however, the committee was dissolved by the Cheka and most of its members arrested and jailed in the notorious Lubyanka Prison. They were released after 10 days of “intensive interrogation” on 27 August. That same day Alvin Miller arrived in Moscow.

Then came the famine. Mennonites in North America responded by sending aid to Russia, but the implementation of actually getting the aid to where it was needed involved incredible patience and perseverance. Alvin Miller was sent to Moscow to begin negotiations; Peter Froese and C F Klassen worked tirelessly on the Russian side. Miller described his first meeting with Peter at the Savoy Hotel in Moscow. “As I came near the stairway, I observed a man approaching whose features were noticeably different from those of the people with whom I had now for some time been dealing...Then he greeted me in German, and we were at once acquainted...There were many things to discuss: my plans, what had been accomplished thus far, how best to proceed. He was a well-read man, had studied in the higher schools in Germany [likely not accurate, he had studied in St Petersburg], knew history, and was able to stand aside and look at the volcanic upheaval in Russia in an objective way, as something almost inevitable following the abuses of the old regime. Yet he had a sympathetic understanding and fine appreciation of all things Russian. In the course of five years of close cooperation with him I was to learn more of his high idealism, his enduring perseverance, and unfaltering courage and faith.” Miller was then introduced to Cornelius F Klassen. Of the two of them he wrote, “It is doubtful whether two other men could have been found among all the Russian Mennonites who would have been able to do the work required, and endure its nerve wracking strain as did these two young men...they have remained courageously at their posts continuously as representatives of the Mennonites during more than eight years...” Soon after Miller’s arrival in Moscow a telegram was sent to B B Janz in Kharkov. He arrived by train, and the four then had meetings in Peter’s apartment to assess the needs, and lay plans for the anticipated relief.

At the same time Benjamin Unruh and the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization were negotiating with the Canadian government and the Canadian Pacific Railway for the acceptance of refugees. On 22 August 1922 B B Janz received word that Canada would receive 3,000 Russian Mennonites. That is when Froese and Klassen were drawn into the negotiations. This was complicated by the fact that in order to sail from a northern port, refugees would pass through Russia, not just Ukraine, so clearance had to be obtained from both Moscow and Kharkov. On 22 September 1922 Froese and Klassen went to Commissar Peter G Smidovitch of the Central Executive Committee, who gave his guarded approval, with some attached conditions. Eventually the various hurdles were cleared, and a total of about 22,500 Mennonites were able to migrate, largely to Canada, most of them travelling through Moscow.

Even during negotiations for emigration proceeding, Froese and Klassen were trying to organize an agricultural society to work on economic reconstruction of the eastern Russian Mennonite colonies. When the United Council of Religious Brotherhoods and Groups was dissolved by government action, Froese and Klassen had no further legal base for their work. Eventually,



The Second Congress of AMLV at Davlekanovo on 27-30 June 1924. Chairman Peter Froese third from right second row

through a number consultations and conferences, the idea arose to create a purely Mennonite organization. A meeting of the representatives of the eastern Mennonite colonies was held in Alt Samara in 11 October 1922, at which time it was decided to create an organization for religious and economic development; a committee was established to initiate the process. At a meeting of the committee held in November 1922 a constitution for the

Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirtschaftlicher Verein (AMLV) was adopted. Because of difficulties with the government it was necessary to split the proposed functions apart. The AMLV continued to deal with economic questions, while the *Kommission fuer Kirchliche Angelegenheiten* (KfK) was established by the churches to coordinate religious dealings. The All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, after prolonged negotiations, confirmed the constitution of the AMLV on 16 May 1923. At the first meeting of representatives held in Alexandertal on 10-16 October 1923, Peter Froese was elected chairman, Cornelius Klassen vice-chairman with the other member of the executive being Franz F Isaak. Subsequent meetings of AMLV were held in Davlekanovo on 27-30 June 1924, and Moscow on 13-17 May 1925 and 23-26 February 1927. The head office of AMLV was in Moscow, in a spacious eight-room house on Taganskaya Ulitsa; this

became the centre for all Mennonites visiting Moscow. The executive of AMLV worked hard at establishing chapters in the various Mennonite colonies it served, eventually having 19 chapters with 56 subchapters. It represented about two-fifths of the Mennonites in Russia, the other three-fifths being in Ukraine. Peter took his job seriously; he visited the various settlements under the jurisdiction of AMLV, especially in time of trouble. In 1924 he reported that in some of the Siberian settlements adults and children were clothed in rags and using straw for beds, unable to plant grain because many lacked horses and cows. American Mennonite Relief was able to provide some help in 1924 and 1925.

At its meeting of October 1923 the AMLV had decided in principle that a publication would be beneficial for the Mennonite community. Finally on 15 May 1925 the various government obstacles and practical considerations were overcome, and the first copy of *Der Praktische Landwirt* was published. Froese was the editor, and frequently contributed articles. Klassen also wrote, as well as J W Ewert, N Schmidt and others. Reports were also received from the various chapters throughout eastern Russia and Siberia. The most frequent subjects related to the development of seed and livestock breeding. The paper came out monthly until the government closed it down after the December 1926 issue.

In the meantime Peter also had a significant personal life. While still working for the Red Cross in 1918 he met and married a Christian Russian girl named Daria Matweyevna, a physician. She did not know German, but enjoyed associating with Mennonites. The couple had three children:

1. Nora - born about 1919
2. Erwin - born 27 December, about 1921



Personnel in the Menno Centre office in Moscow in 1925. Mid row l to r: F C Thiessen, Ewert, Peter Froese, F Isaak and C F Klassen



C F Klassen and Peter Froese in Moscow in 1924

3. Kornelia (Nelly) - born about 1924, named in honour of Cornelius Klassen

The Froese family occupied three rooms of the Menno Centre building, on the second floor of what had been a theatre. Klassen also had a room in this building. The Froese evening living room visits were happy relaxed occasions described as: "All of us gathered around the cheerfully humming samovar, and discussed current developments in our troubled world." Frequent visitors were people such as Cornelius Klassen and Alvin Miller. Anna Reimer, daughter of Jakob and Emilie Reimer of the Kuban Colony, stayed with

the Froese family for about one year, 1925-1926, teaching the children German. She felt the warmth of the home and commented: "Peter Froese and his wife Daria were a happy couple." Peter and Daria went to the Mennonite church every other Sunday, then to the neighbouring Orthodox church on alternate Sundays, where Daria felt more comfortable.

But the general outlook for Mennonite survival as a religion and as a people in the Soviet Union was not good. The *Verband der Buerger hollaendischer Herkunft* (VBHH), the Ukrainian equivalent of the AMLV, had been

virtually destroyed by government actions after its last congress in Kharkov 17-19 February 1926. Its chairman, B B Janz, left his home just hours before the police came to his door. Migration of Mennonite refugees from Russia slowed down to a trickle. By 1928 it became evident that there was not likely to be any further significant help for the colonies, nor migration, so Cornelius Klassen applied for exit visas. To his surprise the applications were granted, and on 23 September the Klassen family left Russia, headed for Canada. At the same time massive collectivization, and the methodical breakup of the economic base of AMLV, forced the executive committee to "accept the proposal to liquidate the AMLV."

In mid-1929 new hope was raised that there might be the possibility of migration when 29 Mennonite families were unexpectedly granted exit visas. Word of this "miracle" spread like wildfire, and soon thousands (about 13,000) Mennonites descended on Moscow. One of the families to arrive was that of Peter's old friend Cornelius Funk. When Cornelius knocked at the door of the Froese residence on 10 November 1929 he was told that Peter had been arrested the previous night, and that it would be advisable for him to leave the district, so as not to arouse the suspicions of the secret police. The Funk family did eventually obtain their exit visas and migrated to Canada.

The story more accurately recorded by a close colleague is that Peter's residence was searched and he was questioned for two hours on 15 October 1929, after which he was arrested and dragged off to the Lubyanka prison, never to see his home again. Hermann Franz Dyck, after a search and questioning of five hours was led off to prison on 16 October. Also after five hours of search and questioning, Cornelius Cornelius Reimer was arrested on the night of October 17-18, and taken by the "Black Raven" to the Lubyanka prison. Now the job of incarcerating the entire former AMLV executive was completed.

Peter was repeatedly questioned by an investigator by the name of Rosenfeld, some of the conversations even being recorded by stenographers. Most of the questioning related to his possible role in agitating for emigration. On Sunday, 3 November 1929, the official accusations leveled against Peter were read out to him. Firstly, he had communicated with foreign representatives for the purpose of counter-revolution. Secondly, he had agitated for revolt among the people with religious and nationalistic aims. Both could result in the death penalty. Should the sentence be rescinded or reduced, the accused would be confined to prison for ten years. These charges instilled

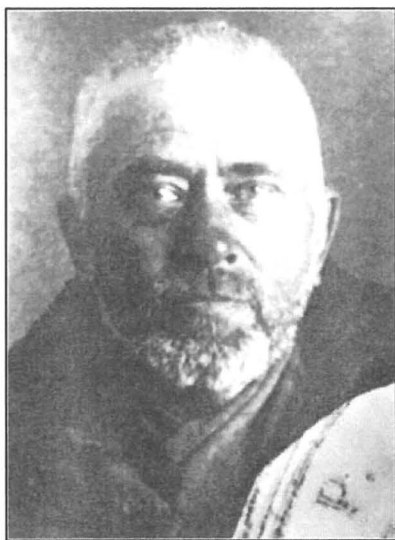


Teatime in the Froese living room in 1926, Peter on the right, drinking his tea

Peter with the fear that he might indeed be executed. With this in mind he asked for paper and pen to record his thoughts. His 56 page statement of defense began with, "Our Mennonite organization involved in the first instance the restoration of the economic base of the people, but has also been involved with the question of emigration...I personally base my actions on the principles of Christian socialism." He delivered this document to his inquisitors on 10 December 1929. That evening he worried. By one o'clock he decided he would not be executed, and fell asleep. In time he did find out that his punishment was to be ten years in prison.

Peter was held in varying degrees of solitary confinement in the "Round Tower" of Butyrka Prison, presumably in an effort to break his spirit, and to stop him from influencing other prisoners. Strangely enough the prison had an extensive library, Peter remarking that he read *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoevsky for the first time. Starting in February 1930 he was able to receive mail from the outside world, and he wrote letters to his wife. On 8 June 1930 he was transferred to the common jail, Cell No 78, where there was more fresh air, and there were people to talk to. On 11 June his wife was able to visit him the first time, and he did see his children as well. Here he was overjoyed to meet his former co-worker, Cornelius Reimer, even having the very crowded bunks close to each other. They enjoyed prolonged talks, though in hushed tones, and prayed together. In the same cell were about 121 prisoners of various kinds, including different racial groups and educational levels, having committed a great variety of offences, including murders. After some time Hermann Dyck was also admitted to the same cell. When it came time for sentencing Dyck was given a five year term, Reimer a ten-year term in a concentration camp. Peter Froese, on the other hand, because of his persuasive manner, was sentenced to further solitary confinement, with the added refinement of unexpectedly varying the time periods involved. Sometimes he reflected on his past, and wished that he would have spent more time with his little son Erwin.

On 2-4 January 1933 wife Daria and son Erwin visited, bringing him a New Testament, an English textbook and an English/Russian dictionary. During this time he received newspapers, so he could follow world events. He was kept in various prisons in and around Moscow. He had a bath every other week, and a monthly haircut. Food was reasonable.



Peter Froese after return
from exile

He had continued periods of interrogations, which seemed to be aimed at changing his outlook on life. After the murder of Sergey Kirov in December 1934 regulations in the prison were made stricter.

October 1935 his wife received a message that two years had been added to Peter's sentence. No packages were allowed, only money and censored letters got through. The last visit by his family, wife and daughter Nora, was towards the end of October 1936. He gave them a tomato he had grown in the prison garden. On 9 October 1937 he was in a cell three by two steps in size. He was worried about his family. He wrote a letter to his wife describing the circumstances, and she actually received it. In 1938 he described the cell as cold in winter, hot and stuffy in summer. In April 1939 he was transferred to Orel Prison, then in May to a concentration camp in the Orlovo-Rosovo region. He worked on the land, helping with the harvest. On 9 January 1940 had an operation (did not say what for), from which he recovered. He

said the doctor was excellent and the nursing care good. After recovery he was back to agricultural work.

On 15 October 1940 he was released! He was not allowed to live in a city, and had to stay at least 100 kilometres from the Soviet border. He chose to stay in a town called Yegorovik near Smolensk. He sent a telegram to his home, "I am free, and on my way home." On 26 October he stopped briefly in Moscow to see his family, and had a celebration with them. He had been allowed only 24 hours in Moscow. Peter then headed for Yegorovik, where his wife visited him in November. Son Erwin visited him in January of 1941. There is no further mention of Peter's family in his journal.

In October of 1941 invading German troops overran the Smolensk region, and Peter was sent to Germany. There he eventually recovered his physical, mental and spiritual health. He lived in Fellbach, near Stuttgart, and was in contact with his friend Benjamin Unruh, who lived in nearby Karlsruhe. He lectured in Germany during World War II, pointing out the difficulties experienced by German-Russian farmers under Soviet rule. Starting in March of 1944 he tried to recreate his prison diary; he had kept the letters he received, and made notes while in prison. Unfortunately he was not able to take this documentation with him when he left, but he did try to indelibly impress the important dates on his memory. He dedicated the 200-page Russian manuscript to his "wife and friend Daria Matveyevna Froese." This document was later translated into German by Karl Fast.

After the conclusion of World War II, Peter helped develop agriculture among the Germans coming from Russia. He also was in contact with Cornelius F Klassen, a man he had worked with for many years; Klassen, Benjamin Unruh and Peter participated in



Post-war representatives of Russian Mennonites: Peter Froese, Benjamin Unruh and C F Klassen

the Mennonite World Conference held in Basel in 1952. Klassen died soon after, of a heart attack, on 8 May 1954.

Peter became ill, and was diagnosed as having an incurable cancer. On two occasions in August of 1957, J J Thiessen of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, visited him at his bedside. After considerable suffering Peter Franz Froese died 23 September 1957. A relative, Rosemarie Froese, wrote of him, "He soon followed his dear friend C F Klassen into eternity - after prolonged suffering. He was able to go home in complete harmony with the will of God, just a week after Brother Unruh had communion with him. This was, using Peter's own words, the largest church of his life." Benjamin Unruh attributed his endurance during imprisonment to his underlying principle of "I will be led by the interests of my people, and by my conscience." So even as a prisoner in solitary confinement, Peter Franz Froese maintained his inner freedom!

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CORNELIUS FRANZ KLASSEN (1894-1954)

Cornelius Franz Klassen was born 3 August 1894 in a sod hut on a small estate along the Tok River, near the Neu Samara Mennonite Colony. He was the eldest of 14 children (ten sons and four daughters) of Franz Franz Klassen (1870-1924) and Justina Wiebe (1874-1933). A younger brother Heinrich (1900) became editor of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* and manager of the Christian Press in Winnipeg. His youngest sister Elfrieda (1917) married Peter Dyck, and was, together with Cornelius, intimately involved with the rescue of 1,115 Mennonite refugees from Berlin in 1947. Soon after the birth of Cornelius the family moved into the Neu Samara Colony, to the village of Donskoye, where Franz began operation of a general store, which he continued to run successfully until 1918.



Cornelius Franz Klassen
1894-1954

Cornelius enjoyed his youth in the midst of a growing family. He and his parents apparently attended the dedication service of the new Lugovsk Mennonite Brethren sanctuary in 1901, being some of the 3,000 guests who participated. He was a good student, so after he had completed the elementary village school in 1907, his parents sent him to the *Zentralschule* in Karassan, Crimea, where he could board with his aunt. He graduated in 1910, then stayed at home for one year to work in the family business. While at home in Donskoye he committed his life to Christ, a commitment which was the mainspring of his subsequent endeavors. He was baptized in the Tok River by

Johann Braun on the basis of his faith, and joined the Lugovsk Mennonite Brethren Church in the summer of 1911.

In the autumn of 1911 Cornelius went to Moscow where, hoping to study on the side, he worked as an apprentice in the office of the gas motor company of Otto Deutz. His work was satisfactory, but he had little time for study; after eight months he studied full time with a tutor. Wanting to prepare himself for university to enter medical studies, he moved to St Petersburg. He studied in Education for one year, 1913-1914, under the auspices of A Tcheriyayev, then served a year as a private tutor. In St Petersburg he met Peter Franz Froese, an engineering student, with whom he was later to collaborate in attempts to help the Mennonites in Russia. His plan to study medicine was derailed when he was drafted into alternate service at the start of World War I.

Cornelius was drafted early in 1915 and chose the *Forsteidienst*, serving out his time in the Schwarzwald Forestry Camp. The first year, because of his poor health, he worked as a gardener, then the second as secretary of the chief forester. During the third year his comrades elected him as their representative to the government and to Mennonite conferences. In this capacity he attended the All-Russian Mennonite Congress held in Ohrloff in August, 1917. There he met Benjamin Unruh, with whom he later worked. At a meeting of forestry and medical orderly representatives in Moscow, Cornelius and Peter Froese were asked to approach the Kerensky government to affect the release of 37 Mennonite medical orderlies who had been imprisoned as spies. They were

successful in the negotiations.

Cornelius was demobilized in December 1917, and returned home. In 1918 he represented the Neu Samara and Orenburg Mennonite Colonies in negotiations with Moscow, then in 1919 he went to the capital of the Bashkir Republic for similar negotiations. In 1920 the representatives of the Ural and Siberian Mennonite Colonies elected Cornelius and Peter Froese to plead their causes in Moscow. Here Klassen and Froese worked with the All-Russian Relief Committee. One of the meetings in 1921 was raided by the secret police, and Cornelius was jailed in the famous Lubyanka Prison, but then after interrogation he was released. On the day of his release Alvin J Miller, of the Mennonite Cental Committee (MCC), arrived in Moscow, attempting to arrange the flow of relief supplies from the American to the Russian Mennonites. Cornelius acted as his translator in the negotiations with the Kremlin, and in time became Miller's helper and colleague in the work of feeding and clothing thousands of Mennonites in their time of need.

In 1923 Mennonites organized the *Verband der Buerger hollaendischer Herkunft* (VBHH) to represent the Ukrainian colonies, where B B Janz was the chief executive. Those from the Ural region and Siberia formed the *Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirtschaftlicher Verein* (AMLV), with Peter Froese chairman, Cornelius the vice-chairman and Hermann F Dyck the secretary. The two organizations attempted to improve the conditions in the Mennonite colonies, but in time increasingly, together with David Toews in Canada, worked to pave the way for the mass migration of the mid 1920s. They worked tirelessly to overcome innumerable obstacles; about 22,500 Mennonites eventually immigrated to Canada.



The executive of the AMLV (l to r) H F Dyck
Peter Froese and Cornelius Klassen



Cornelius, Harold and Mary in 1927

During this time Cornelius travelled widely, but was based at the Menno Centre in Moscow. His brother Gerhard was staying with him to receive medical help in Moscow, but he died 22 April 1923 of tuberculosis. Back in Neu Samara father Franz died 21 January 1924. In 1925 he accompanied his mother and seven younger siblings to London, England, on their way to Canada, but then returned to Moscow because he felt that the work for his people was not yet completed.

The MCC had an office in Moscow, and one of its workers was Mary Brieger, Alvin Miller's secretary. She was of Baltic German Lutheran descent, and a devout Christian. She had married a student, Jakob Reimer, and they had a son Harold, born 5 October 1923 in Moscow. Jakob was transferred to Tashkent as an engineer, and possibly because of the separation a divorce resulted, likely

about 1925. As Cornelius and Mary became better acquainted, they fell in love. They were married on 11 September 1926 in the Menno Centre of Moscow. Johannes Klassen, Mennonite Brethren minister from Alt Samara, performed the marriage ceremony. Realizing the difficulty a member marrying a divorced person would present to the church, Cornelius withdrew from the Lugovsk Mennonite Brethren Church. It should be noted that in 1929, when he was already in Canada, Cornelius received a warm letter from the leader of the Lugovsk church, Bernhard Bergen, informing him that by a unanimous decision he had been reinstated into the church.

Cornelius and Mary had a total of five children: Harold (1923), from the previous marriage, then there was Walfried (1927), Herbert (1929), Irmgard and Justina (twins, born 1931). Justina was born partially paralyzed and died at the age of two and a half years.

By 1928 it became evident that there was not likely to be any further significant help for the colonies, nor emigration, so the Klassens applied for exit visas. To their surprise the applications were granted, and on 23 September they left Russia with their two sons, Harold and Walfried. They visited Riga, Mary's home, then Germany, eventually sailing for Canada from Liverpool on 30 November. They arrived in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on 12 December, and joined the rest of the Klassen family in a rented house on Donald Street. Much later Cornelius was informed that soon after their departure his co-worker and close friend Peter Froese had been arrested (on 15 October 1929) and sentenced to ten years in prison. The GPU could not understand how Cornelius had slipped through their net.

Cornelius could not remain inactive for long. In 1929 he attended an MCC meeting, and thereafter visited many American churches on its behalf. In 1930 he went to the second Mennonite World Relief Conference held in Danzig, travelling with David Toews. They both made presentations, Cornelius about the situation of the Mennonite churches in Russia since 1920, Toews about the immigration of Russian Mennonites to Canada. Upon his return Cornelius received the difficult assignment by the Canadian Board of Colonization and Immigration and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) to help collect the travel debt (*Reiseschuld*). The loan from the CPR had been over \$1,000,000 dollars. This was a taxing, sometimes thankless and unpleasant, but often rewarding work. In 1936 Cornelius travelled to the Mennonite World Conference with David Toews, to Switzerland. He took the opportunity to visit Mennonites in Holland, Germany and Switzerland, and also renewed acquaintances with friends and relatives in Latvia.

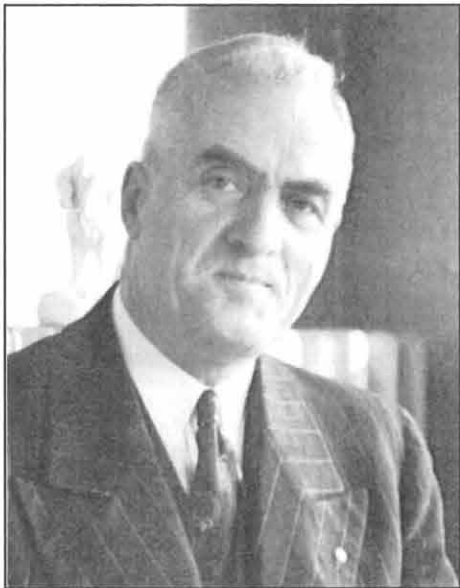
Beginning in 1936 Cornelius was a member of the Committee of Welfare and Public Relations of the MB General Conference and in 1941 he was secretary of the Military Problems Committee of the Mennonite Churches of Western Canada. Starting in 1944 he was a member of the MCC, and a member of its Executive Committee from 1946. He was on the board of trustees of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute of Gretna, Manitoba, and of the Mennonite Brethren Bible College of Winnipeg. He was an associate editor of the Mennonite Encyclopedia.

With the outbreak of World War II the question of nonresistant status loomed for the Mennonites in Canada. Cornelius, David Toews, B B Janz and other Mennonite leaders carried on negotiations with the Canadian government, opening the way for alternate service. At the same time the Mennonite Central Relief Committee (MCRC) was organized in 1940, with Cornelius elected as secretary-treasurer. During the war years Cornelius was therefore occupied by the work of the MCRC, alternate service for military draftees, and the collection of the *Reiseschuld*.

By 1941 the MCRC had sent the first of many shipments of clothing to help the war victims in Britain. In August of 1945 the MCC (the parent agency of MCRC) commissioned Cornelius to go to Europe to help deal with the refugee situation. He was appointed the European Commissioner for Refugee Aid and Resettlement from December 1945 until his death. As such he was to look for and help Mennonite refugees, to set up camps, and to deal with organizations such as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). In this capacity he travelled widely in Britain, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Germany and France. This brought him directly into negotiations for the Berlin Mennonite refugees, where he, together with Peter and Elfrieda Dyck (Elfrieda, his youngest sister) played a significant part in the miracle of the escape of 1,115 across the Soviet Zone. He worked tirelessly with the immigration of thousands of refugees to Canada, Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. He was the founder and administrator of the resettlement housing program for Danzig Mennonite refugees, and was involved with the organization of old people's homes in Leutesdorf, Enkenbach and Pinneberg. As well as being involved officially in many committees, he also acted as a counselor for the revival of Mennonite church life. Through his labours and extensive speaking tours on behalf of relief and help for refugees, he became the symbol of these efforts.



Cornelius, Elfrieda and Peter Dyck



Cornelius in Frankfurt, April 1954

While Cornelius was busy in Europe the family moved to British Columbia, arriving in Mission on 23 April 1948. His time was divided between the family, visits to the churches in North America and travels to Europe. By 1952 he was dealing with the Canadian authorities regarding entry visas for the more difficult refugee cases.

Cornelius spoke at the closing program of the European Mennonite Bible School in Bienenberg, Switzerland on 18 January 1954, then in March took the family with him on a trip to Geneva and the Swiss Alps. On 7 May he was driving from Bremen in Germany to a peace conference which was to be held in Heerewegen, Holland, where he was to give a lecture. On the way he felt some chest pain, but continued to drive (very fast, as he apparently usually did), until he reached Gronau, Germany. There he saw a doctor, and was immediately admitted to hospital with a mild heart attack. Treatment seemed to improve his condition, and that evening he had a one-and-a-half-hour meeting with Wilhelm Regehr, director of a refugee home.

He read and prepared his lecture until 10 PM, telling the nurse that he needed to reach Heerewegen the following day. Then he fell asleep. At 12 midnight he had another, much more serious heart

attack. His condition worsened, and he died at 11 AM on 8 May 1954. His wife Mary had been sent for, but arrived shortly after his death.

A memorial service was held on 12 May at the Nord-Ost Evangelical Lutheran Church in Frankfurt. It was led by Cornelius Wall, and attended by representatives from the MCC, and by Mennonites from Germany, Holland, Switzerland and France. At the burial service the following day C N Hiebert and Gerhard Hein spoke. Cornelius was interned in a small Mennonite cemetery near Leutesdorf/Neuwied in Germany. Another memorial service was held on 16 May in the Elmwood Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg, where Cornelius had long been a member. Speakers paying tribute included A H Unruh, B B Janz, J J Thiessen, C A DeFehr, J A Toews and H H Janzen. Telegrams and flowers flowed in, both to Germany and Winnipeg from many parts of the world.

Dr Walter Quiring aptly assessed the life and work of Cornelius Franz Klassen. He wrote, "The history of our people after the war will portray C F Klassen as a man who, in times of crisis, has served with skill and sacrificial dedication, and that often bordering on self-sacrifice...at his graveside stand not only his wife and children, but also an uncountable crowd of sorrowing people from the wide world, from wherever there are Mennonites."

A firm faith in Jesus Christ was the life-long mainspring of Cornelius's thoughts and actions. His motto "*Gott kann*" (God is able) inspired many with whom he came in contact.

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Chapter V

NIKOPOL

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HISTORY OF NIKOPOL

Nikopol is a city located on the right bank (north) of the Dniepr River on the Kahkovske Reservoir, about 105 km downstream from Ekaterinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk). It is on one of the earliest trade routes in the region, and a strategic crossing point over the Dniepr River. In the 1600s it was a Sich or the fortified headquarters of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, and was known as Mikitin



Nikopol, at the corner of Ekaterinoslav and Kupetscheskaya Streets about 1900

Roy. In 1652, the Sich was relocated, and it was renamed Mykytyne. After expelling the Turks from this region the Russians destroyed it in 1775, then built a fort nearby. A settlement grew up around the fort, in 1782 named Nikopol, which means “City of Glory” in Greek. It occupies a broad peninsula between two arms of the Dniepr River, where its banks are low and marshy. For centuries it has been one of the places where the middle Dniepr is most conveniently crossed.

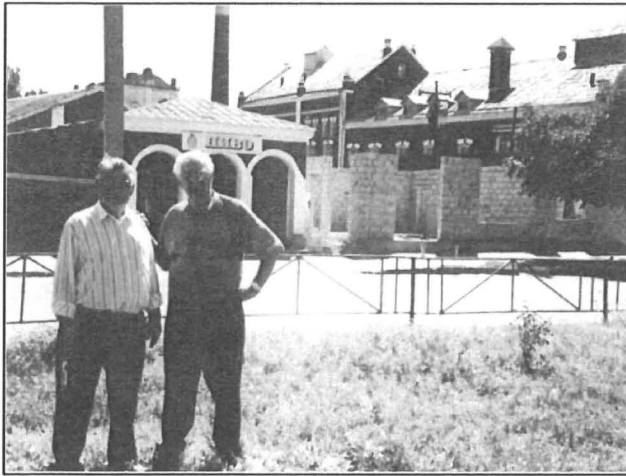
The city was an important trade centre for Mennonites in the area as well as for villages of the *Judenplan* project. In 1900 the population was 21,000, with the main economic activities relating to agriculture, shipbuilding and fish processing. The population was said to consist mainly of Little Russians (Ukrainians), Jews and

Mennonites. There were at least 5 flour mills in the city owned by Mennonites: J J Siemens, Abraham Friesen, Peter Friesen, Gerhard Regehr, Jakob Dyck with David Klassen. There was a Mennonite school as well as a church in Nikopol. The small Mennonite community in Nikopol offered a good contact point for Mennonite travellers through the region.

In the early 1920s the Mennonite businesses were nationalized, and some of the owners imprisoned. With famine of 1922 the Mennonite Central Committee operated a food kitchen in Nikopol. In the 1930s a number of Mennonites from the surrounding areas moved into the city, but most left on the Great Trek of 1943. At least one of the flour mills was totally destroyed by the Russians (J J Siemens Mill) with the approach of the German Army during the war. During the German occupation of 1941-1943 a *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* was organized, as well as a



School where Harry Giesbrecht attended in the early 1940s. Now a medical clinic



Large brewery across the street from the Giesbrecht house, with Harry Giesbrecht and friend

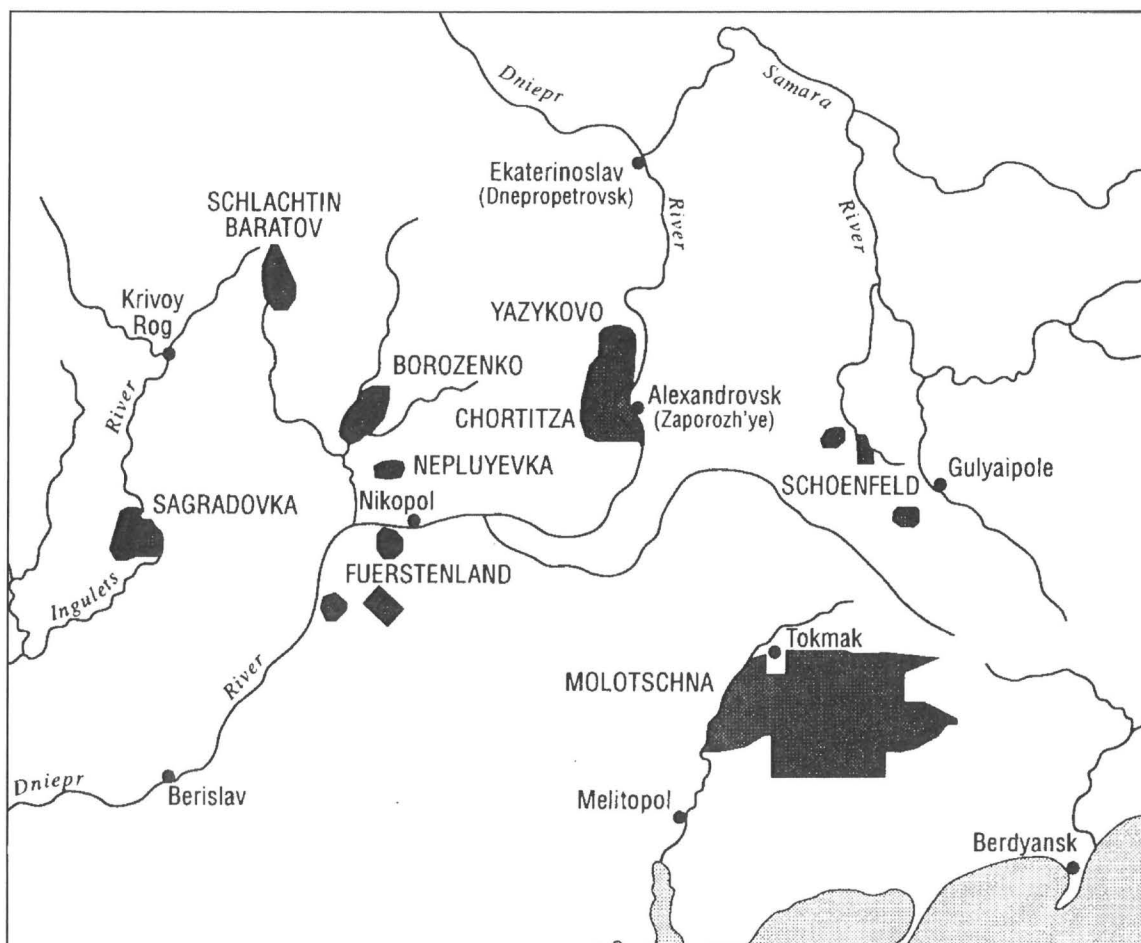
German School System.

A series of dams was built on the Dniepr River to produce hydroelectric power, but also to make the river navigable and allow irrigation. The Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power plant was built on the river downstream from Nikopol, producing the Kakhovka Reservoir in 1956. It is the second largest reservoir on the Dniepr, measuring 2,155 kilometres square, with an average depth of 8.4 metres.

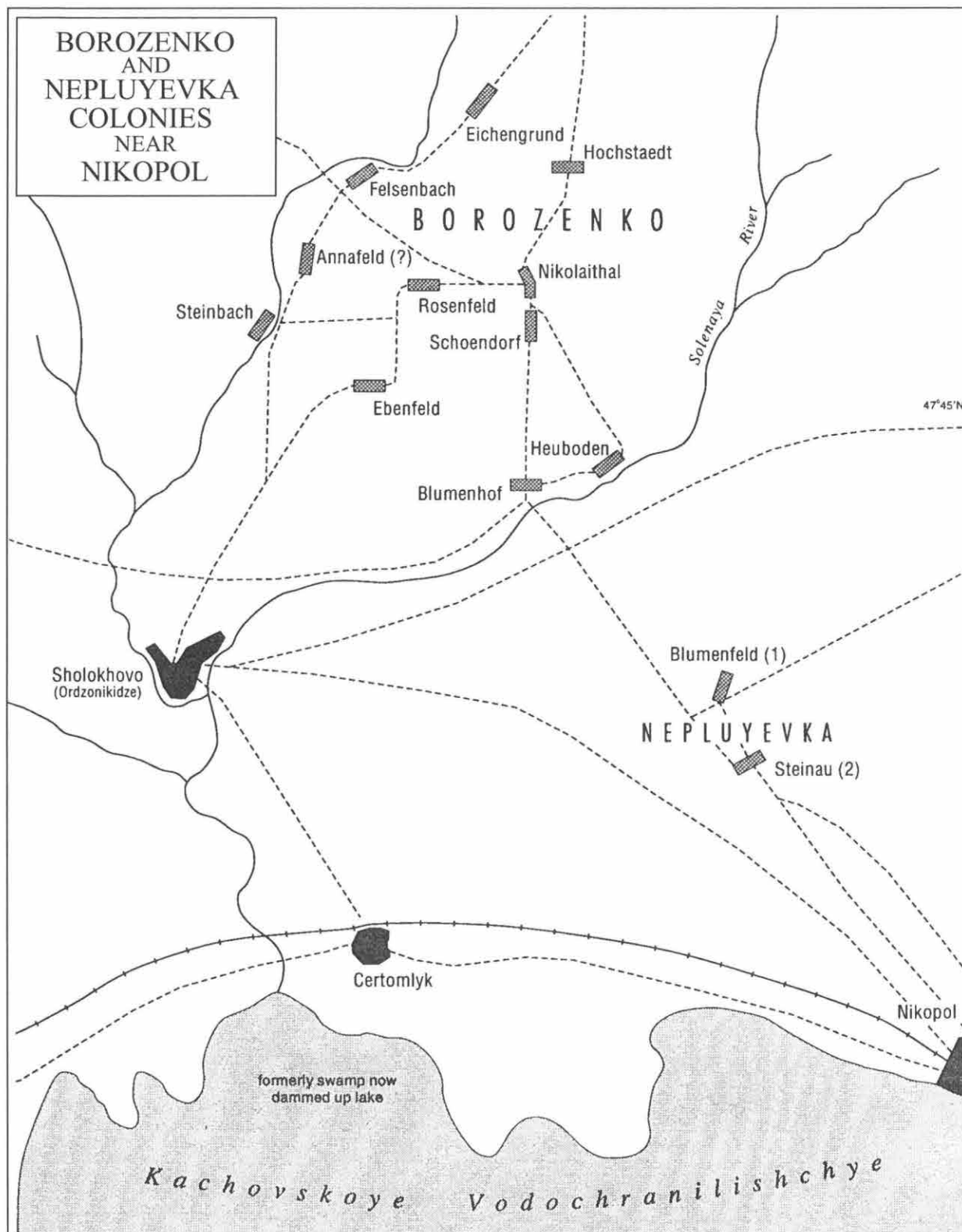
Today Nikopol has a population of 157,000 (1996 estimate). It is an industrial centre, being surrounded by one of the world's richest manganese ore mining areas, the Nikopol Manganese Basin. In 1971 the basin was estimated to have 15 major deposits, 985.1 million metric tons, 38.8% of the Soviet

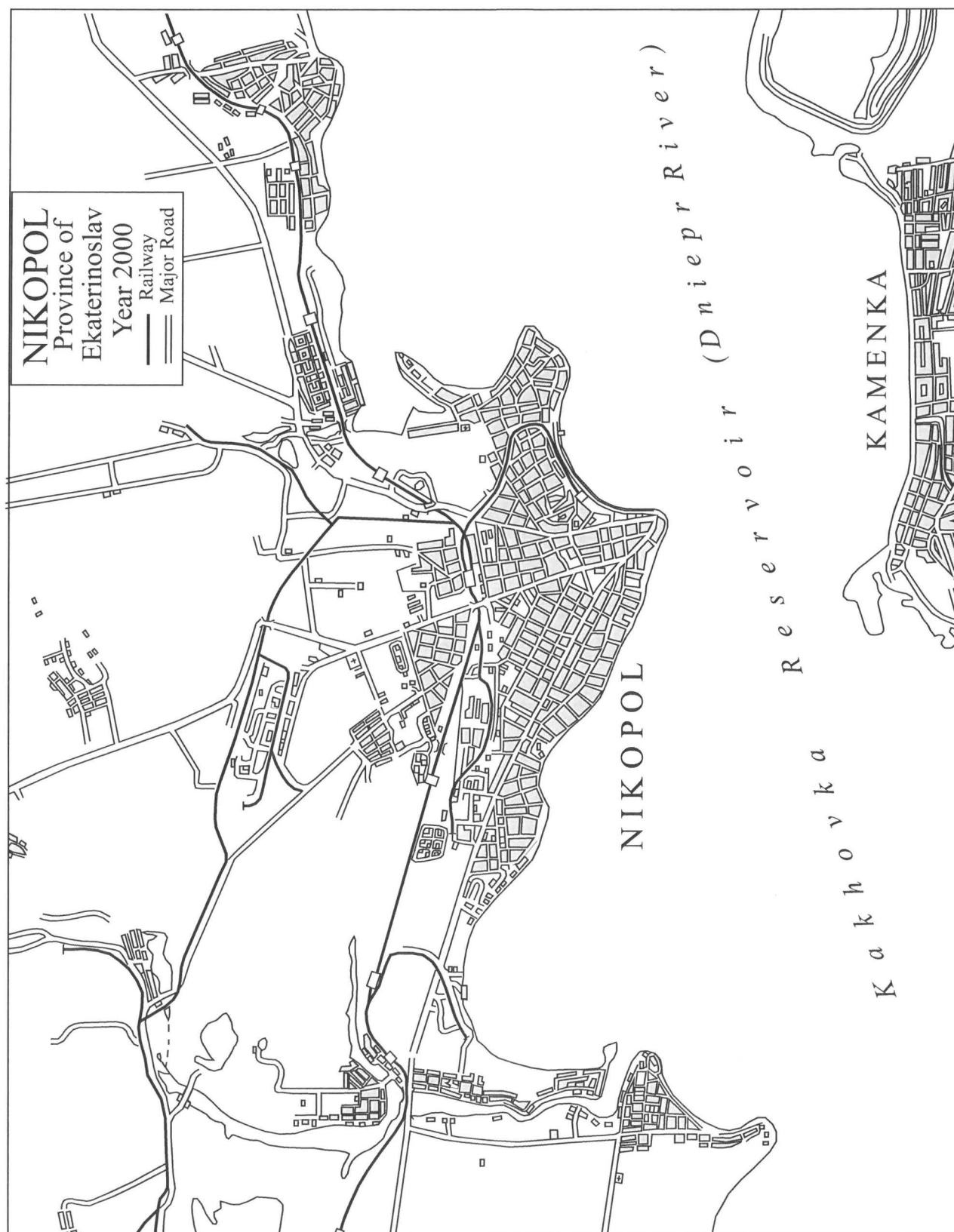
reserves. Nikopol has a crane plant, a ferroalloys plant and a pipe plant as well as a large brewery. It also boasts a regional studies museum as well as a school of medicine and a teacher training school.

There is now no evidence of the past Mennonite presence.



Nikopol and surrounding Mennonite colonies





LIST OF PEOPLE

(People who at one time lived in Nikopol)
(Each name will appear in **bold** print only once)

Never a major Mennonite centre, Nikopol still did play a part in the overall life of Mennonites in Russia, if for no other reason that it was a convenient place to travel through. We have found specific mention of 78 Mennonites who lived and worked in Nikopol.

Dyck, Arnold

Born 1889 in Hochfeld, Chortitza

Studied at Academy of Art in Moscow, also in St Petersburg, Stuttgart and Munich.

After a number of years teaching art in Nikopol he and his family migrated to Canada

He was a pioneer in Canadian Mennonite writing, both in High or Low German

Founded a literary journal and edited the *Echo Verlag* series of books on Mennonite history

"*Verloren in der Steppe*" and "*Koop enn Bua*" are among his best-known writings

He died in Germany in 1970

Dyck, Jakob J

Wife Mrs Dyck

Children

In 1908 Jakob Dyck, together with his father-in-law David Klassen, purchased a flour mill in Nikopol

They both settled in Nikopol with their families

Dyck, Mr

Mr Dyck and Mr Wiebe were owners of a brick factory

Fehderau, Salomon

Born 19 February 1878 in Berdyansk

Parents Aaron Fehderau and Anna Willems

Married **Maria Rempel**, who was born 4 February 1880 in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna

Lived in Gnadenfeld, then in Nikopol, then back to Gnadenfeld, **4 children**

Salomon died 14 April 1920 in Gnadenfeld, Maria died 28 February 1962 in Chilliwack, BC

Friesen, Abraham

Owned a flour mill

Friesen, Peter

Owned a flour mill

Giesbrecht, Anna

Born about 1888; lived in Lichtenau, Molotschna

Husband Johann Giesbrecht was imprisoned and exiled to the far North or Siberia in 1931

He was born 31 August 1881 in Blumenfeld. They were married 1 January 1906

Johann had been manager of a credit union in Lichtenau

Several months after Johann's imprisonment Anna and her children were told to leave their home by the next day, taking 1 cow and what they could carry

Anna and her children walked from Lichtenau to Melitopol

The children were:

Johann - born 1908

Anna - born 1910

Louise - born 1914

Viktor - born 1921

Heinrich (Andre) - born 1923

Elfrieda - born 1926

Harry - born 1 October 1928

There was a small Mennonite settlement in Melitopol called *Krasnaya Gorka* (Red Hill) where they stayed for a month or so. With the help of a Jewish family they were able to find a house to live in

Daughter Anna worked as an executive in a co-operative office, Louise was a clerk in a shop. After about a year, in 1932, they moved to Kamenka, then by barge crossed the river to Nikopol in 1933

They lived at 65 Kalashnikova Street, near the former J J Siemens flour mill

Father **Johann Giesbrecht** completed his sentence, and rejoined the family in 1936

Son Johann was sent into exile in 1937, and has never been heard from again

Heinrich (Andre) was drafted by the Soviet Army in 1941, and eventually was imprisoned in a concentration camp near Solikamsk

Daughter Anna and her **2 children** managed a collective farm near Nikopol

The family stayed in Nikopol until 1943. When the German Army retreated from the area, the Giesbrecht family was evacuated to the Warthegau area near Warsaw by train

Anna and her 2 children came separately, by horse and wagon

Parents Johann and Anna, Elfrieda and Harry managed to migrate to Canada, arriving

1 May 1948. Louise came later in 1948, Anna in 1949. Victor had served in the Russian Army, but managed to escape, and also came to Canada in 1949

Heinrich (Andre) was finally released from imprisonment in 1954 and lived in the city of Solikamsk. With the help of his brother Harry, was able to get to Germany in 1984

Because of his suffering during imprisonment, father Johann was in poor health, and could not work. He died 24 February 1962 in Winnipeg

Hooge, Gerhard

Owned a steam-powered flour mill

According to the *Forstei* Taxation List of 1908 valued at 10,000R

Hooge, Peter

Businessman in Nikopol

Machinery and flour business and warehouse

According to the *Forstei* Taxation List of 1908 valued at 15,000R

Isaak, H

Secretary of the Nikopol Mennonite Relief Committee 1921-1923. He and chairman

Gerhard Regehr sent a letter to the *Mennonitische Rundschau* describing the terrible conditions, and thanking for the help received. Letter was written 13 December 1922

Klassen, David

Wife Mrs Klassen

Children

In 1908 David Klassen, together with his son-in-law Jakob Dyck, purchased a flour mill in Nikopol

They both settled in Nikopol with their families

Kornelsen, Peter Johann

Born 19 June 1881 in Schobonew, Savgorod, Ekaterinoslav

Spent about seven and a half years in the *Sanitaeter* service

Wife **Maria Konrad**

Daughter **Maria**

Was trained as a minister, but also learned some medicine, and had some accounting skills

Spent some time in Nikopol, likely 1922 or 1923, as the accountant for the J J Siemens flour mill

When the mill was being confiscated by the Communist government, Peter wrote the last cheque for the company

To Winnipeg, Manitoba, where, in 1936, he was the first pastor of the South End MB Church

Loewen, Johann J

Born 1871 in the Yazykovo Colony, South Russia

At the age of 15 moved to Friedensfeld with his parents

Interested in poetry and music

In 1897 married neighbour's daughter, Helene Friesen. They settled in Blumenfeld of the Nepluyevka Colony

Had 6 children: Anna, Johann, Heinrich and Nikolai (1910), two others died in early childhood

Johann founded a choir in their church, remaining the conductor for 30 years

Published 300 page book of poetry in 1899 "*Herzenstoene fuer schlichte Christen-Hezen*"

Collaborated with Bernhard Dueck in writing hymns

Tried, but were unable to migrate in 1929

Appointed gardener on a collective farm

Arrested and sent to jail in Nikopol three times, but was freed

June 1937 again arrested. Visited by son Nikolai, but this soon stopped

Tortured, eventually "confessed" to destroying vineyards on the collective farm

Son Nikolai also imprisoned. They together with a nephew were transferred, and not seen again. Were all three likely shot, probably in Dnepropetrovsk, 29 October 1937

Loewen, Nikolai Johann

Born 1910, parents Johann J Loewen and Helene Friesen

Married Anna Wiebe in Friedensfeld 1 December 1929

Nikolai worked as an assistant to a veterinarian

Went to Nikopol and Kharkov to study as a veterinarian, but because of difficult circumstances was not able to complete his studies

Worked as a veterinarian in Friedensfeld

Three children: Harry (1930), Johann (Hans) (1934) and Helena (Leni) (1937)

His family stayed in Friedensfeld during the time of his studies

Arrested September 1937, to prison in Nikopol, transferred to Dnepropetrovsk prison and shot 29 October 1937

Wife and children eventually reached Canada

Penner, Abraham

Student of Heinrich Epp, likely in the Chortitza *Zentralschule*

For over 20 years, beginning in 1877, teacher in Kronsthal

Teacher in Nikopol, likely 1898-1920

In 1910 owned a steam-powered flour mill in Nikopol

He was also the leading minister of the Mennonite Church

Died 3 January 1920

Peters, Heinrich Heinrich

Owner of estate Peters (Heinrich H), located in Ekaterinoslav Uezd, at village Alexandrovka
403 dess with 2 houses and outbuildings

Peters (1908, 1916) is listed as coming from Nikopol

Regehr, Gerhard

Flour mill owner in Nikopol

Five Regehr brothers: Jakob (born 1851), Peter (1856), Heinrich (1860), Isaak (1864) was a
teacher and Mennonite Brethren minister, and Gerhard (1866)

Chairman of the Nikopol Mennonite Relief Committee 1921-1923. He and secretary

H Isaak sent a letter to the *Mennonitische Rundschau* describing the terrible conditions,
and thanking for the help received. Letter was written 13 December 1922

Rempel, Jakob Aron

Born 9 April 1883 in Heuboden, Borozenko Colony

Wife **Maria Sudermann**

Children: **Alexander** (1915), **Eleonore** (1918)

Student at *Predigerschule* and university in Basel, Switzerland

Taught in Chortitza *Zentralschule*, then *Kommerzschnule* in Yusovka

Teacher at Gymnasium in Nikopol 1916-1918

Then in 1918 to Ekaterinoslav for further teaching

Regehr, Jakob Gerhard

Born 9 April 1895 on the Estate Reinfeld, Ekaterinoslav

Parents Gerhard Regehr and Maria Siemens

Gerhard was teacher on the estate

Elementary school at Reinfeld, then *Zentralschule* and *Kommerzschnule* in Nikopol

Married Eudokia Karlkowa on 20 May 1920

Circumstances gradually worse, so with 1 daughter they migrated to Canada in 1924

Employed in the printing business in Winnipeg, joined the North End MB Church in 1943

4 more children

Wife died 2 September 1965; married Anna Braun 13 October 1967

Jakob died 15 April 1986

Schellenberg, Jakob

Owned a business dealing in wood

According to the *Forstei* Taxation List of 1908 valued at 10,000 R

Schulz, Jakob Dietrich

Wife **Margaretha Janzen**

Children: **Maria, Jakob, Peter, Anna, Margaretha**

Originally lived in Schoenwiese/Zaporozhye
Tried to leave Russia in 1928 but did not get passports
Moved from place to place, including to Nikopol
Lived in Nikopol in 1937. Father Jacob and daughter Margaretha were arrested in Nikopol
30 November 1937, while wife Margaretha was in Zaporozhye
Jakob likely died in exile, wife Margaretha lived in Novosibirsk in 1962, and died there
2 June 1975

Siemens, J J

Owner of a large steam-powered flour mill
Built in 1908 by the firm of Ame, Gieseke & Konegen, of Braunschweig, Germany
Located on Kalaschnikovaya Street
Received gold medals for the quality of the flour at world expositions
Building burned down by the Russian Army prior to occupation by the German Army in
World War II

Sudermann, Maria Heinrich

David and Maria Sudermann owned Estate Alexeyevka (Sudermann) near Nikopol
Husband David died in 1902
Maria and the children had to leave the estate in 1917, and moved into Nikopol
Then moved to Rosenthal, where the family had a house built
Children: **Maria** (1878), **Heinrich** (1879), **Katharina** (1883), David (1884-1885),
David (1886-1890), **Jakob** (1888), Louise (1890-1892), **Anna** (1892), **Nikolai** (1898)
Mother Maria died in 1933 in Chortitza

Toews, Aron Peter

Born 28 January 1887 in Fuerstenau, Molotschna
Wife **Maria Sudermann** born 30 March 1878, granddaughter of Heinrich Heinrich Heese II
Children:
Natalie - born 16 May 1912 in Alexeyevka Estate
Olga - born 23 March 1913 in Ekaterinoslav
Nikolai - born 9 May 1918 in Nikopol
Maria - born 6 March 1920 in Nikopol

Wiebe, Heinrich David

Born 22 September 1917 in Rosenort, Sagradovka Colony
Educated in Chortitza and Krivoy Rog
During the German occupation of the region 1941-1943 Heinrich was a school inspector
for German schools in the area, including the Chortitza Colony and Nikopol
He was single at the time, but had met Helene Janzen at teachers' meetings. They later
married after they both reached Canada, in Coaldale on 12 August 1951
Heinrich obtained further education in North America and for 26 years taught Slavic
Languages (Russian and Ukrainian) at the University of Manitoba
Both Heinrich and Helene were active in church work at the Central MB Church. Heinrich
was ordained as minister in 1975. He died 25 June 1986 in Winnipeg of cancer

Wiebe, Mr

Mr Wiebe and Mr Dyck were owners of a brick factory

Wieler, Johann Johann

Established a small private school (presumably elementary school) in Nikopol

Graduate of the Chortitza *Zentralschule*, Heinrich Franz one of his teachers

A number of years as assistant for the *Fuersorgekomitee* in Odessa

Had government elementary school teaching certificate

Taught in private school in Friedensfeld, then Nikopol

Was in Nikopol by 1876, then left to teach at the Halbstadt *Zentralschule* 1879-1883

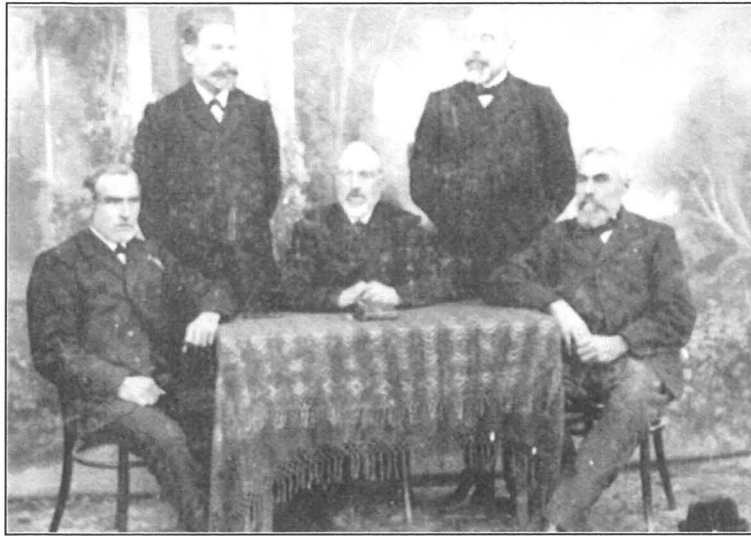
Then became itinerant minister, then minister in Rumania, where he died at age 50

X, Mrs

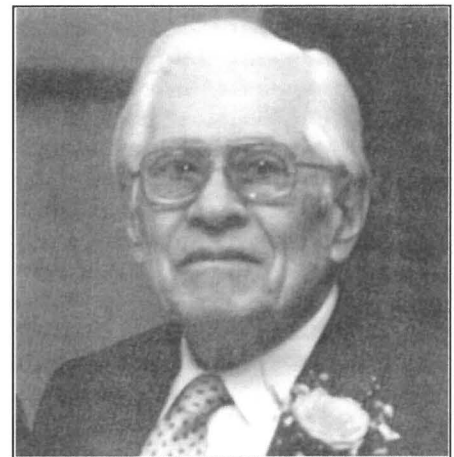
A Mennonite lady with **seven children** lived in Nikopol during the time the Giesbrecht family lived there (1933-1943)

She received a monthly pension of 2,000R to support her family

Harry Giesbrecht knows of no other Mennonites that lived in Nikopol during that time



Five Regehr brothers. Gerhard, the mill owner in Nikopol is the one standing, on the left side of the picture



Jakob Gerhard Regehr (1895-1986)



Harry and Manya Giesbrecht at the entrance road to Nikopol



Mr and Mrs Peter Hooe and relatives. Presumably the Hooes are the couple in the middle

MENNONITE INSTITUTIONS

Mennonite School

Private school was established by Johann Wieler

Wieler was well educated, having a government elementary school teaching certificate

Presumably an elementary school

Wieler was visited by an itinerant minister in 1876, when he was mentioned as running the school

Wieler left to teach at the Halbstadt *Zentralschule* in 1879, so the school likely closed down at that time

Mennonite Church

A small Mennonite congregation was established

Affiliated with the Chortitza Mennonite Church, listed as such in 1910

Did not have a church building of its own to meet in

In 1910 Abraham Penner owned a steam-powered flour mill in Nikopol; he was also the leading minister of the church

Nikopol Mennonite Relief Committee

Chairman Gerhard Regehr, Secretary H Isaak

The committee sent a letter to the *Mennonitische Rundschau* dated 13 December 1922, and published 7 March 1923

In the letter they pointed out the terrible conditions in Nikopol and the surrounding villages, both from the point of view of famine and lack of clothing

Nikopol was one of the centres from which food and clothing was distributed by American Mennonite Relief. The letter also thanks for these relief supplies.

MENNONITE BUSINESSES

Dyck and Klassen Flour Mill

In 1908 Jakob J Dyck and his father-in-law David Klassen purchased a mill in Nikopol

Friesen Flour Mill

Flour mill owned by Abraham Friesen

Friesen Flour Mill

Flour mill owned by Peter Friesen

Hooge, Gerhard

Owned a steam-powered flour mill

According to the *Forstei* Taxation List of 1908 valued at 10,000R

Hooge, Peter

Businessman in Nikopol

Machinery and flour business and warehouse

According to the *Forstei* Taxation List of 1908 valued at 15,000R

Penner Flour Mill

In 1910 Abraham Penner owned a steam-powered flour mill in Nikopol

Penner was also the leading minister of the local Mennonite Church

Regehr Flour Mill

Gerhard Regehr, born in 1866, was a flour mill owner in Nikopol

Schellenberg, Jakob

Owned a business dealing in wood

According to the *Forstei* Taxation List of 1908 valued at 10,000R

Siemens Flour Mill

Large steam-powered flour mill owned by J J Siemens

Constructed in 1908 by the firm of Ame, Gieseke & Konegen, of Braunschweig, Germany

Built of masonry, with the ground floor and the corners made to look like stone

Small balcony on the fifth floor

Located on Kalaschnikovaya Street

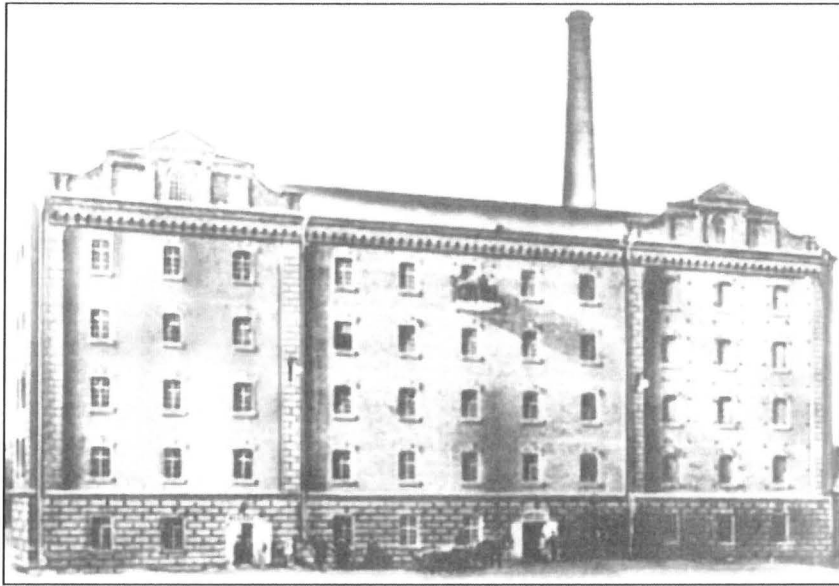
Had very modern equipment and received gold medals for the quality of the flour at world expositions in Paris and other cities

Said to process 3,000 bushels in 24 hours

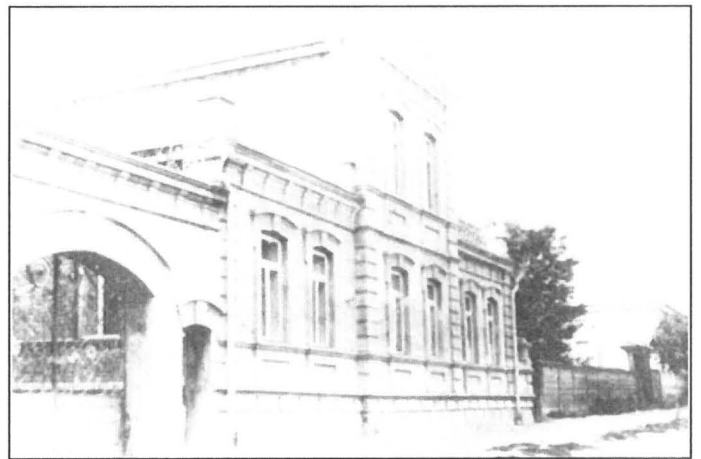
Building burned down by the Russian Army prior to occupation by the German Army in World War II

Wiebe and Dyck Brick Factory

Brick factory owned by Mr Wiebe and Mr Dyck



J J Siemens mill about 1910



Dyck residence in 1917



The house where the Johann Giesbrecht family lived

INSTITUTIONS USED BY MENNONITES

Gymnasium

Jakob Aron Rempel taught at a *Gymnasium* in Nikopol 1916-1918

Judiciary/Prison

In the 1860s Mr Schmigaila was a prosecuting judge based in Nikopol. He ordered the four Mennonite Brethren from the Chortitza Colony to be jailed in Ekaterinoslav
Nikolai Johann Loewen was arrested in Friedensfeld in September 1937, went to prison in Nikopol, then was transferred to Dnepropetrovsk prison, and shot 29 October 1937

Selbstschutz

A *Selbstschutz* was organized by the German Army when it occupied Nikopol during World War II, 1942-1943

There were at least 2 training sessions

Presumably this was meant to allow German-speaking people to defend themselves if the German Army should retreat from the region

Veterinary School

Nikolai Johann Loewen went to Nikopol and Kharkov to study as veterinarian

Volkdeutsches Mittelstelle

Established during the German occupation of Nikopol during World War II, 1941-1943

This was a centre where German speaking people could gather

Many Mennonites from the surrounding villages, especially from the Sagradovka colony, streamed into the city during this time

Zentralschule

Jakob Gerhard Regehr student about 1907-1911

Kommerzschule

Jakob Gerhard Regehr student about 1911-1915

MENNONITE ESTATES NEAR NIKOPOL

Information from *Mennonite Estates in Imperial Russia*, by H T Huebert

Alexeyevka (Sudermann)

Ekaterinoslav Uezd, Novosofievka Volost, possibly part of a village, near Nikopol

Original owner probably David Sudermann (1852-1902)

He died of liver cancer

After his death owned by Maria Heinrich (nee Heese) Sudermann

Maria and children had to leave estate in 1917, moved to Nikopol

Then moved to Rosental into a house the family built. She died 1933

Son Jakob Sudermann was an artist, painted even when exiled to work camps

He died about 1940

Jakob David Sudermann, possibly a different relative, but from Alexeyevka, was elected chairman of the regional Zemstva, likely early Oct 1917

1,100 dess (according to PR 719 dess)

So: Q p 116, 117; 1908 FL p 14; PR II p 133; Family History; Art display at Mennonite Heritage Centre; *Molotschnaer Flugblatt* 28 Oct 1917 p 7

Iverskoye (Iverskaya)

Ekaterinoslav Uezd, Loshkarevskaya Volost, near Nikopol

Owned by Hermann Johann Neufeld (1901, 1908)

Not certain, but this is likely the estate tabulated in a questionnaire, information given:

Before 1914 about 3,500 dess; at that time land in the regions valued at 450R per dess, therefore land worth 1, 575,000R

Buildings estimated worth 130,000R, equipment 99,520R

Total worth therefore 1,962,020R

Annual income from grain, sheep and other stock about 250,000R

Costs just over 40,000R, the profit therefore exceeded 200,000R for that year

The size of the estate specifically known to be owned by Neufeld was:

3,025 dess (PR I list), 2,609 dess (PR II list), 3,500 dess (1908 FL)

So: Q p 119; 1908 FL p 12; PR I p 89; PR II p 146; David Rempel questionnaire

Miropol (Friesen)

At Nikopol, Ekaterinoslav

Owned by Johann Johann Friesen

250 dess

So: 1908 FL p 11

Miropol (Reimer)

At Nikopol, Ekaterinoslav

Owned by Peter Peter Reimer

100 dess

So: 1908 FL p 20

Reinfeld (Ekaterinoslav)

First called Helenafeld, then Reinfeld. Russian name Annovka
Ekaterinoslav Uezd, Nikolaipol Volost; began as estate, in time functioned as a village
Daniel Peters (1794-1879) bought 6,000 dess N of Chortitza Colony
About 1840 traded land with the village of Ignatevskaya. With his new home he
established Petersdorf

He gave 2 of his younger daughters 300 dess each of undeveloped land:

Helena (Lena) Daniel Peters (1848-1919)
married Franz Heinrich Pauls 16 Oct 1866

Anna Daniel Peters (1853-1932)
married Jakob Siemens 7 Dec 1872

Also called Tschistopol [Siemens]

As early as 1867 the Pauls may have built a home (then called Helenafeld)

Likely 1875 the Siemens joined them, together to found Reinfeld

Another daughter, Maria Daniel Peters (married to Bernhard Pauls) may have initially
been involved, but they moved to the USA in 1876

Bought additional land

Next generation also settled in the area

Establishments in Reinfeld (Ekaterinoslav) about 1912:

Braun, Daniel (wife Maria Pauls)

A murder/robbery 22 April 1912, then again 6 May 1912

On 22 April Braun wounded in the right arm by revolver shot;
at least 3 people murdered: a woman, a girl and the girl's
nursemaid

Robbers/murderers on trial in Ekaterinoslav 25 and 26 Oct 1912,
some sentenced to death, some to prison terms

Pauls, Daniel (wife Katharina Braun)

Pauls, Franz Heinrich (wife Helena Peters, daughter of Daniel Peters)

Pauls, Kornelius (wife Anna Pauls)

Regehr, Gerhard, teacher on the estate, married one of the estate owners'
daughters, Maria Siemens; son Jakob attended *Zentralschule* and
Kommerzschule in Nikopol

Schellenberg, Johann (wife Helena Pauls)

Siemens, Daniel (wife Helena Pauls)

Siemens, Jakob Johann (wife Anna Peters, daughter of Daniel Peters)

Siemens, Jakob (wife Elisabeth Peters)

While not specifically mentioned there was probably a massacre in Reinfeld:

Jakob Siemens (1877-1919), Helena Pauls (nee Peters) (1848-1919), Anna Pauls
(nee Pauls) (1883-1919), Johann Schellenberg (1866-1919); all died in 1919

Abandoned late 1919 because of bandit attacks

So: Jasykowo pp 43, 119-20, map at end of book; FRS 3 Nov 1912 p 8;

David Rempel p 113; D Peters pp 1, 351, 381, 383, 407; *Journey Report* of
Gerhard Peter Regehr; MR 28 May 1986, p 24

Smolensk

Verkhnedneprovsk Uezd, Gulyaipole Volost, near Nikopol

Near villages of Avdotyevka and Maryevka

Owned by Dietrich Dietrich Friesen (1886)

Manager for 28 years was Peter Engbrecht

Had often helped and advised neighbouring villages

1,911 dess

Attacked by bandits 15 May 1918

Bandits had Peter Engbrecht first pay the employees, then they shot him

Peter, wife, daughters Anna and Katharina (Katya) shot

Son Peter escaped by running barefoot to Estate Friesental

Grandmother survived as well as a Peter Janzen family, who lived on the estate

Bandits came from village Avdotyevka

On 21 May 1918 Austrians occupied the area, restored order. The soldiers burned some villages which harboured the bandits, property was returned

So: *Volksfreund* 18 June 1918 p 4; FRS 9 July 1918 pp 2-4; PR II pp 128, 129

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Chapter VI

ODESSA

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HISTORY OF ODESSA

Odessa is located about 40 km northeast of the mouth of the Dniester River on Odessa Bay and the shore of the Black Sea. It is a major seaport, the largest port in Ukraine. Geographic coordinates are 46°28' N and 30°44' E. Area is 163 km². The city is situated on terraced hills overlooking a small harbour. It has a mild dry climate with average temperatures in January -2°C and 22°C in July. Annual precipitation averages 350 mm (14 inches). The population in 2004 was 1,012,500; the mayor was Eduard Yosypovych Hurvits.

The site was once occupied by an ancient Greek colony, then later by Kievan Rus, the Golden Horde (Mongolians), Lithuanians and Turks. Russia had increasing interest in the Black Sea, and fought a number of wars against the Turks, generally expanding its territory southward. In September 1787 another in the series of wars broke out. Russia won a number of victories, and by the Treaty of Jassy in 1792 the Russian border was extended westward to the mouth of the Dniester River as it entered the Black Sea.

Empress Catherine the Great established Odessa as a Russian naval fortress on the ruins of a small village of Khadjibey. A special edict dated 24 May 1794 placed Odessa on one of the best harbours in the region. Originally, 1797-1803, Odessa belonged to the New Russia gubernia. In 1803 the town and its vicinity became an autonomous administrative unit, while the rest of Odessa county formed part of the Kherson gubernia. Odessa was the seat of the governor-general of New Russia from 1803 to 1874. Early in its history the city was fortunate to have a recent French emigre, Duc de Richelieu, appointed as governor in 1803. He followed through on the plans for the city, organizing its amenities and infrastructure. When Richelieu returned to France in 1814 he was followed by an equally capable Count L-A Langren (1816-1823), then by Prince M Vorontsov.

The development of Odessa proceeded on the basis of F de Volland's plan of 1794, which was adopted as the general outline in 1803. Prymorski Boulevard was built up in 1826-1829, to be the administration district. The great Potemkin Staircase (1837-1841) descended from the main city to the port. Buildings were constructed in the classical style, with a flavour more Mediterranean than Russian, influenced by the French and Italians. With the death of Catherine, and then her son Paul, Alexander I became the Czar. He further expanded the borders of Russia in another war with Turkey (1806-1812), which brought the province of Bessarabia into the empire. This province was part of the hinterland for Odessa. In 1819 Odessa was declared a free port, a status it retained until 1859.

Odessa became home to a very diverse population: Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, Rumanians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Albanians, Armenians, Italians, French and Germans. The first German colonies in the region were established in 1803, primarily by immigrants coming from South Germany, many of whom were Pietists. The fertile plain of Bessarabia attracted many more Germans to the region, 1,500 families founding 12 German colonies by 1816. Alexander Pushkin, who was "exiled" to Odessa 1823-1824, wrote of the city "...you can smell Europe, French is spoken and there are European papers and magazines to read."

Odessa continued to be important because of its trade. By 1815 it was handling more than half of the trade passing through the Black Sea and Sea of Azov ports. Most of this consisted of wheat, and to a lesser extent wool. From the 1830s to the 1850s it became the largest wheat exporter on the Black Sea and in the Russian Empire.

Growth was interrupted by the Crimean War (1853-1856), when Odessa was bombarded by

British and French naval forces. On 8 April 1854, thirty-two French and British ships sailed to Odessa, including the British ship *HMS Terrible*, at that time the largest war steamer in the world. The demand for surrender of the city was ignored. On 10 April over 350 naval guns opened fire on Odessa. The defending garrison had only 48 small cannons. An attempt by the enemy to land troops was repulsed by the Russians. The ships were forced to move away from the coast, leaving three vessels to patrol the area. The British steam frigate *HMS Tiger* ran aground on a foggy morning, was shelled, the crew taken prisoner, then the ship was set on fire. Later divers lifted the engine and 11 guns out of the sea, some of which were used to reinforce the Russian garrison. In 1904 divers lifted out two more of the guns, which were given to the city. One was mounted on a granite pedestal, facing the sea, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the defense of Odessa.

Odessa soon recovered from the ravages of war. In the 1860s and 1870s development was quickened by the construction of railways, which connected the city to its Hinterland, but also in 1866 to Kiev, Kharkov and Rumania. The Suez Canal, completed in 1869, linked Odessa by sea to India, eastern Asia and the Far East. The Odessa-Vladivostok Shipping Line was the primary connection between European Russia and the Far East before the Trans Siberian Railway was built. By 1874 Odessa was the largest wheat exporter in all of Europe.

The city became the home of a significant Jewish population during the nineteenth century. In 1897 they were estimated to comprise 37% of the population. They were, however, repeatedly subjected to severe persecution. There were major pogroms in 1821, 1859, 1871, 1881, and of course 1905. Many Jews fled to Palestine after 1882; thereafter the city became an active base for support of Zionism.

There were never many Mennonites living in Odessa, but it was always an important administrative and business centre for them. Wilhelm Aron Martens (1781-1845) established a business in Halbstadt, dealing with butter, eggs, wool and other agricultural products. With a wagon he would travel as far west as Kherson and Odessa selling his wares. With the profit he would buy land. On his way back from one of his routine trips to Odessa, having sold all of his merchandise, he was approached by a land agent in Kherson, and bought 20-24,000 dessiatines of land in the region. Martens in time became the wealthiest Mennonite estate owner in Russia. The *Fuersorge Komitee*, which administered all colonists in New Russia, was based in Odessa from about 1823 until it was dissolved in 1871. Mennonites often needed to travel to Odessa to transact business with this agency. Representatives of the newly formed Mennonite Brethren Church, for example, were called to sign an agreement with the chairman of the committee in 1860.

There was an active printing and publishing business in Odessa. *Unterhaltungsblatt* (published 1842-1862) carried reports written by Johann Cornies detailing the agricultural and economic status of the Molotschna in the 1840s. Mennonites read the *Odessaer Zeitung* (published 1863-1914), and also sent in letters and wrote articles for the paper. They often had items printed in Odessa by firms such as A Schultze.

Odessa was also a manufacturing and administrative centre, so Mennonites were involved there in many categories of business. The *Christlicher Familienkalenar* carried advertising of all manner of products and services available in Odessa, from homeopathic pharmacies to agricultural machinery, presumably because Mennonites could be convinced to utilize what was offered. Towards the end of the nineteenth and into the beginning of the twentieth century an increasing number of Mennonites studied in Odessa, especially at the New Russian University, at least six in

the medical faculty.

Volume of trade in Odessa climbed sharply in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Value of goods reached 129 million rubles in 1893, and peaked at 174 million rubles in 1904, second in the Russian Empire only to St Petersburg. Keeping pace with the trade was an ever increasing industrial output, including flour milling, other agricultural processing, and metallurgical manufacturing. With increasing activity, the population of the city rose. In 1875 there were 193,000 inhabitants, in 1897 it was 404,000 and by 1914, 669,000. It was the fourth largest city in the Russian Empire, after St Petersburg, Moscow and Warsaw.

In 1905 Odessa was the site of a workers' uprising, supported by the crew of the *Potemkin*, battleship of the Russian fleet. This resulted in the massacre of hundreds of citizens by government troops, near to, but not actually on, the Potemkin Steps.

After the Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent Civil War, Odessa was occupied by several groups, including the Ukrainian Ruda. After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk it was controlled by German and Austrian troops, from March to November 1918. Supreme command of the Austrian forces was based in Odessa. British, French and Greek expeditionary forces, supported by the local Whites, controlled the city at various times. From August 1919 to February 1920 it was held by the White Army of General A Denekin. Finally, in February of 1920, the Red Army took, and maintained control of the city. During the Civil War there was much destruction of Odessa. By 1920 the population had shrunk to 428,000. The citizens of the city suffered from a severe famine in 1921-1923, brought on in part by crop failures in the region, but also by deliberate government action. After the famine the population was down to 324,000.

Original Mennonite plans for migration from Russia to Canada in the 1920s involved the port of Odessa. In July of 1922 the Canadian Board of Colonization signed a contract and Canadian Pacific was ready to send two vessels to Odessa to pick up from 2,700 to 3,000 emigrants. Preparations were underway when cholera broke out in Ukraine, and Odessa was placed under quarantine. Besides this, the unsettled political conditions made passage through the Dardanelles unlikely. So Odessa as an escape route was abandoned.

By 1926 there had been some improvement, the population being 420,000. Of these 38.7% were Russians, 36.5 % Jews, 17.4% Ukrainians, 2.4% Poles and 1.3 % Germans.

During World War II Odessa was besieged by German and Rumanian forces from August to mid October 1941. Upon being captured it was made the capital of Transnistria, and was administered by the Rumanians. About 60,000 Odessans (mostly Jews) were either massacred or deported. Many parts of Odessa were destroyed either during the initial fall, or later upon the recapture by Soviet forces in April of 1944.

During the 1960s and 1970s the city grew, although most of the Jews immigrated to Israel, the United States or other western countries. Despite being part of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, and now of the independent Ukraine, Odessa maintains its unique cosmopolitan mix of Russian-Ukrainian-Mediterranean cultures. Odessa continues to be an important port. Industries include ship building, oil refining, chemicals, metalworking and food processing. It is a base for the Ukrainian Navy, and is home to a fishing fleet. There are actually two ports: the city centre and an internationally important oil terminal Yushny. Odessa is a frequent tourist destination, and it is home to a famous eye institute. There is little trace of the Mennonite past, except for the Mennonite Heritage Cruises, which start their pilgrimage in Odessa every September.



Potemkin Steps leading to the passenger port



Odessa passenger port from the Potemkin Steps



Statue at the top of the Potemkin Steps in honour of Duc de Richelieu, who was the governor of Odessa from 1803-1814

One of the broad streets which was planned during the time of Richelieu



Primorski Boulevard



Intricate, beautiful
Odessa architecture

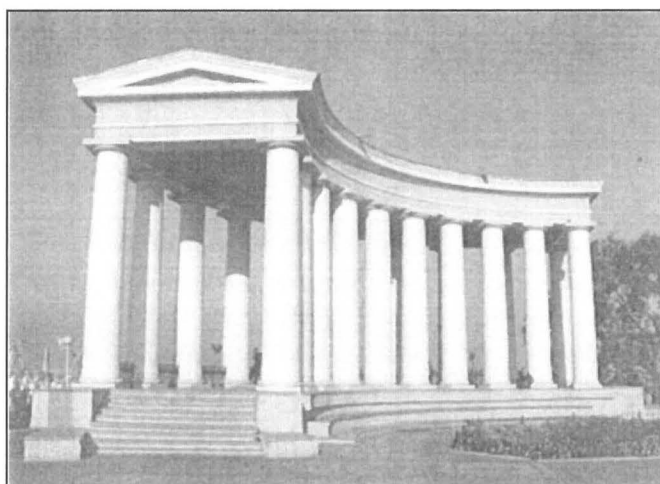
Decorative architecture of the opera house



Saint Panteleymon's Cathedral and Convent

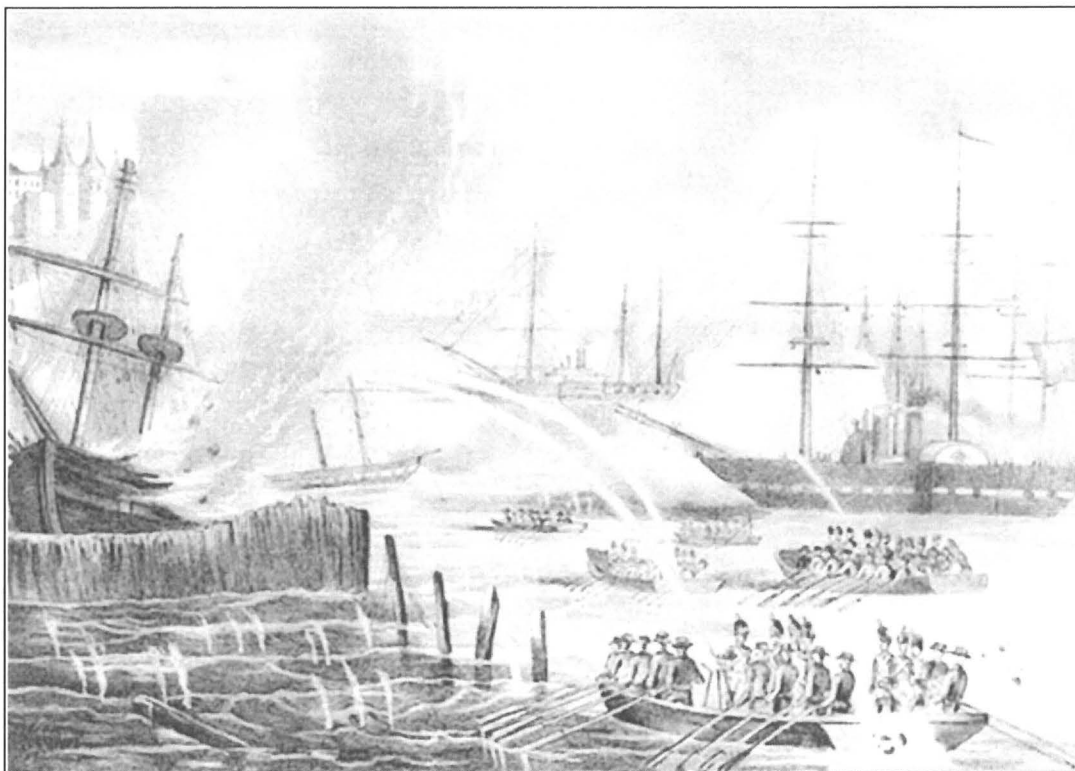


The "Red" Hotel

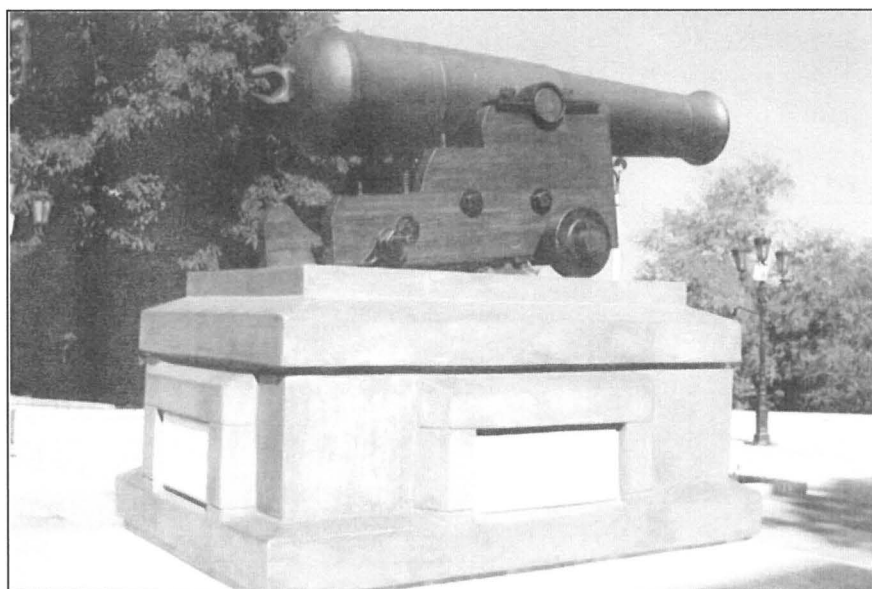


The Colonnade of the Vorontsov Palace

The bombardment of Odessa by the British and French during the Crimean War, and celebrating the defense 50 years later



“The Bombardment of Odessa” engraved and published by H Gerhart



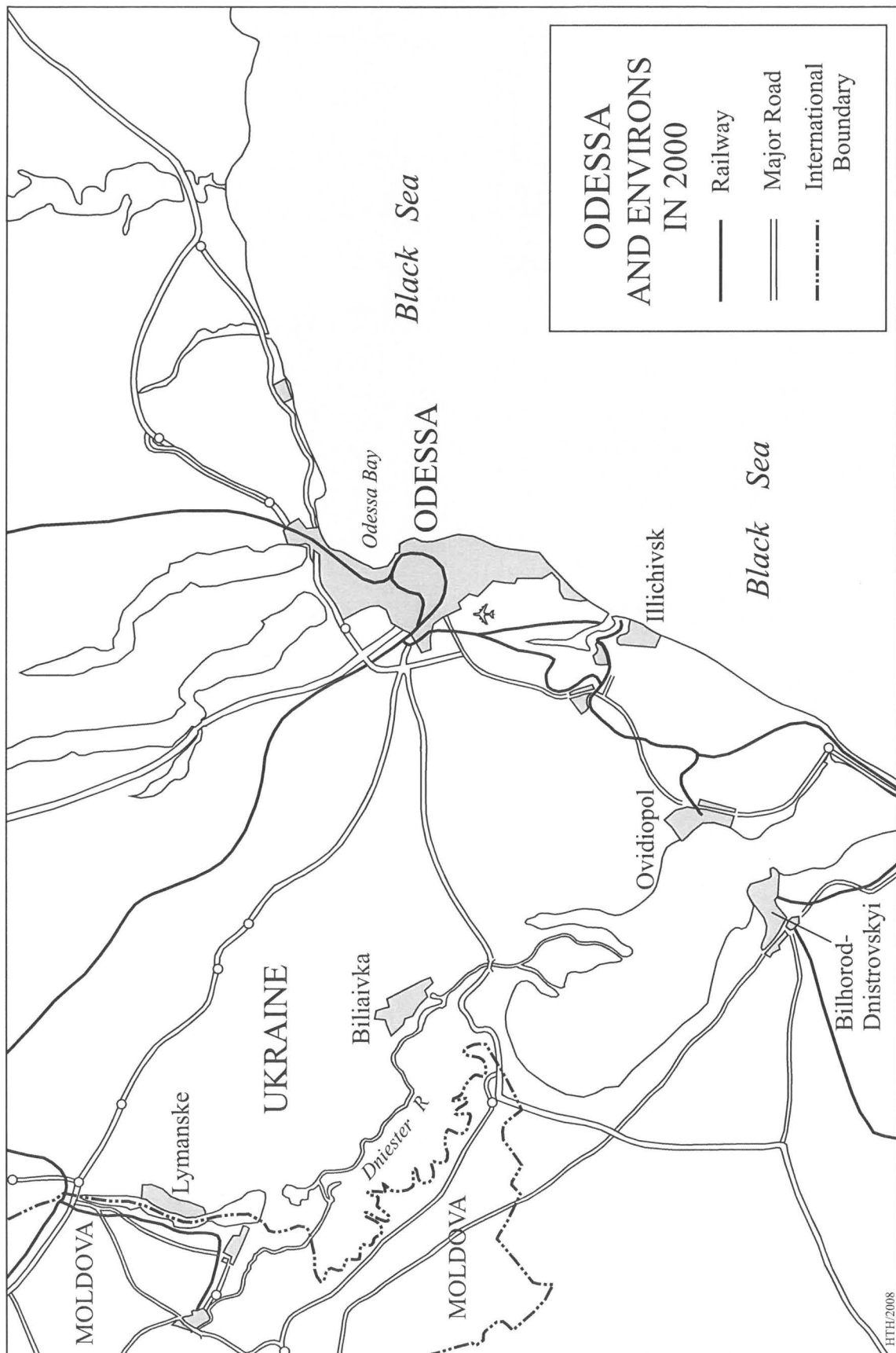
Cannon from the British frigate *HMS Tiger* raised from the sea in 1904 and mounted in Odessa facing the sea, to commemorate the defense of Odessa in 1854



Bolsheviks entering Odessa in February 1920



Vendors offering their wares at a tourist ship. Note the black car in the background: Mafia agents collecting their "protection" money





ODESSA INSTITUTIONS USED BY OR INVOLVING MENNONITES

Fuersorge Komitee fuer die Kolonisten der suedlichen Gebiete Russlands (see also Ekaterinoslav)

(Called *Fuersorgekomitee* or Guardian's Committee)

(Also called *Comptoir der Auslaendischen Ansiedler im Suedlichen Russland*)

Established by the Russian government to supervise foreign settlements in Russia, and be responsible for their progress and administration.

Most Mennonite interactions with government officials, regardless of the specific sphere, were through the Committee. Government laws and regulations were instituted under its jurisdiction and Mennonite requests or responses went through this channel. It must be added that where Mennonite self-government failed, the committee was asked, or almost forced, to intervene in disputes.

From 1763 to 1782 it was in Saratov, near to a German settlement on the Volga River
Then possibly in Kherson for a time

From 26 July 1800 the offices were in Ekaterinoslav until about 1820

From 1799 Samuel Kontenius was the government official in charge of foreign settlers.

He was well liked, and played an important part in the agricultural development of the Molotschna. He resigned from his position in 1818 because of poor health

Ivan Nikolayevitsch Inzov was appointed president in 1818

1820-1823 Inzov was appointed governor-general of Bessarabia and Novorossiysk, so he took the office of the *Fuersorgekomitee* with him to his capital, Kischinev. He expanded the scope and strength of the committee, in time supervising 286 villages. In 1833 he became the governor-general of all of South Russia, with the seat in Odessa, again the committee going with him. He died 25 May 1845 in Odessa

An official in the agency during this time (1835) was named Faddeyev

Eduard von Hahn was the next president (1845-1849). He had some disagreements with the Mennonite colonies, deposing some of the officials

Subsequent presidents were:

Baron Friedrich Rosen (1849-1853)

Baron Paul Mestmacher (1853-1854)

Vladimir A Islavin (1856-1858)

Alexander Hamm (1858-1866)

Fedor (Stanislavov) Lysander (1866-1867)

Vladimir (Woldemar) Ettinger (Oettinger) (1867-1871) - the last president

There were three branch offices: Ekaterinoslav, Kherson, Bessarabia

From 1818-1837 it was subject to the Ministry of the Interior, then 1837 to 1871 to the

Ministry of Royal Estates. Both of these Ministries had headquarters in St Petersburg

It was said that after 1818 the Committee issued endless orders, had cluttered files and mountains of paperwork

Hermann Janzen, for some time secretary of the Molotschna Colony, was surveyor for the

committee for many years

Kornelius Huebert was the secretary during the Crimean War, about 1850-1858; after that he was school teacher in Schoenwiese

After his graduation from the Chortitza *Zentralschule* Johann Johann Wieler was the manager of the *Fuersorgekomitee* for a number of years

Elder Jakob Warkentin and *Oberschultze* Klassen travelled to Odessa to demand disciplinary measures against Johann Cornies because he had inflicted punishment on church members. The chairman of the *Fuersorgekomitee* investigated, did indeed find fault, but with those who were doing the complaining. Elder Warkentin was relieved of his position in 1842.

Elder Heinrich Wiens of the Margenau-Schoensee congregation applied the ban to three people who had, on order of the village mayor, punished a wrongdoer. With this clear intrusion of church discipline into village law enforcement, a complaint was lodged against Elder Wiens. The situation was personally investigated by Chairman Hahn. Wiens was declared deposed in 1847, and banned from Russia for life.

The committee was directly involved in many of the educational matters of the colonies
In 1859 it gave Mennonites the permission to operate the Gnadenfeld *Waisenschule* and the Ohrloff *Vereinsschule*

The committee was dissolved in 1871, with the various colonies coming under local municipal administrations

Printing Establishments

Especially before they had their own printing establishments, Mennonites often had materials printed in Odessa

First hymn book produced by the Mennonites in Russia had the first nine printings done in Prussia. The tenth printing was done in Odessa by the *Stadtbuchdruckerei* in 1844, arrangements made by the Molotschna Mennonite *Kirchenkonvent*

A confession of faith was printed by Franzow and Nitsche in 1853

Some Mennonite history books were also printed in Odessa; "*Die Chortitzer Mennoniten*" written and published by D H Epp was printed by A Schultze in 1889

Odessaer Zeitung

Odessa was a cosmopolitan city, containing many ethnic groups. As a result there were newspapers in many languages, Russian, Ukrainian, French, English, Yiddish, and also German

Odessaer Zeitung was a privately-initiated German language newspaper published in Odessa which depended on subscriptions

First issue came out on 7 January 1863

It was founded by Louis Nietzsche, who also founded the *Neuer Haus- und Landwirtschafts-Kalendar* in 1865

It promised to discuss Politics, Literature, Art, Business, Industry and Colonization

Initially it appeared every Monday, Wednesday and Friday

A one year subscription was for 8R, out of town 10R

Half a year was 5R, out of town 6R

Quarter year was 3R, out of town 4R

It was printed by the *Bookprintingpress* of L Nitzsche on Polizeistrasse, in House Hoeltzl, No 36

Initially it consisted of 8 pages, and regularly had a number of features:

- National News, Foreign News, Local News

- Agricultural articles

- There were surveys of political events

- There was commercial news

- Book reviews and theatre notices

- Often serialized novels

- The last page had advertising

- A section headed *Koloniales* was devoted to news and opinions of the German-speaking colonists, especially those in New Russia

On 1 January 1873 it had larger pages, but only 4

- Printing and publishing was still done by L Nitzsche

Editors of the paper over the years were:

- A Wald - in the first years

- L Nitzsche - certainly in 1873, editor and publisher

- Kart Haerter

- Jakob Toews - some time during the 1880s

- Karl Wilhelm - an important editor for many years

Mennonites frequently contributed to the paper: news, as well as opinion and debate.

- A wide variety of subjects was discussed and debated, such as educational needs and pedagogical methods

The *Odessaer Zeitung* placed a considerable number of advertisements in the *Christlicher Familienkalender*. It was noted that under the designation *Koloniales* generally informative articles regarding church life, schools, agriculture etc. were of such interest that all colonists should read them. A year's subscription in 1901 was 10R

In 1904 a series of articles reported on readership: There were 68 subscriptions in the Chortitza Colony, and 143 in the Molotschna. It should be remembered that there were many more readers - Mennonites did tend to pass the papers around

The paper continued publishing well into 1914. In January 1914 it was published daily, except Sundays and holidays

Rates had not gone up substantially, the cost being 8R for 10 months, although the size had shrunk to 4 pages

After the onset of World War I the news in August and September was carried: "The War of Russia against Germany and Austria" with official reports from Petrograd.

Reported on *Evangelisches Lazarett* (Christian Military Hospital) in Odessa, which treated "wounded warriors"

German newspapers in Russia were shut down soon after the start of the war against Germany

The last *Odessaer Zeitung* was likely published 26 October (8 November) 1914,

- Volume Number 246

Unterhaltungsblatt

Printed in Odessa 1846-1862

Official publication of the *Fuersorgekomitee*

Official title *Unterhaltungsblatt fur deutsche Ansiedler im Suedlichen Russland*

Published monthly, beginning April 1846, ceasing publication in 1862 (May?)

Comments in the first copy remind the Colonists that they need to be thankful for the fatherly care of the government in supplying such a delightful and useful publication in the German language

Editor in 1851 was Ph Jaensch, by 1854 it was J H Sonderegger, censor was Mr Sinitzinn

Editor in 1859 was W Schwamberg

Also in 1854 there were 32 subscribers in Chortitza, 29 in the Molotschna

Carried articles discussing a wide variety of agricultural subjects

Had detailed reports on the economic and agricultural progress of many of the colonies

Johann Cornies wrote lengthy reports about the Molotschna

Regularly quoted grain and other commodity prices

Last copy found in the archives was May 1862. In it there was no mention of ceasing to publish, so it may have continued for at least the rest of the year

Replaced by the *Odessaer Zeitung* in January 1863

LIST OF PEOPLE

(People who at one time lived or studied in Odessa)
(Each name will appear in **bold** print only once)
(many of the people listed were students, and lived in
Odessa for only a brief time)

A total of 26 Mennonites have been identified as living or studying in Odessa.

Albrecht, Abram

Born 20 August 1881 in Berdyansk

Married Malwine Siemens 10 April 1903 in Petershagen, Molotschna

Children:

1. Malwine

2. **Anna** - born 4 February 1905, died 7 July 1982 in Odessa

3. **Martha** - born 13 July 1908 in Tokmak, Taurida, lived in Berdyansk in 1942, died
6 June 1982 in Odessa

Duerksen, Gerhard David

Graduate of Gnadenfeld *Zentralschule*

Studied medicine at the New Russian University in Odessa

One of the doctors on staff at the Ohrloff Hospital, Molotschna

Resigned 1910 to go abroad for some time

Esau, Peter J

From Ekaterinoslav

Studied medicine at the University of Odessa

Practiced in Ohrloff, Molotschna

Friesen, Abram Abram

From Schoenau, Molotschna

Graduate of Ohrloff *Zentralschule*

Classical *Gymnasium* in Ekaterinoslav

Studied Science (*Naturgeschichte*) at the New Russian University in Odessa

Taught Science at the Halbstadt *Mittelschule* and *Kommerzschule*

Friesen, Peter Martin (Martinovitch)

(see separate biography in Volume I of *Mennonites in the Cities of Imperial Russia*)

Born 20 April 1849 in Sparrau, Molotschna

Parents Martin Jakob Friesen and Helena Klassen

The family owned a small farm, a treadmill, and his father built wooden mills
Martin was the fifth of seven children

He was a student of Isaak Peters in *Dorfschule* in Sparrau, student of P J Neufeld
at the Steinbach Estate

Teachers in Halbstadt *Zentralschule* were Unruh and Molyarov

Studied in Switzerland 2-3 years, then Odessa, followed by Moscow for a year

Married **Susanna Fast** 1 September 1873

Her parents were Johann and Susanna Fast

Children:

Susanna - born 1874 in Halbstadt

Agatha - born 1878, died of rheumatic fever at age 16, in 1894 in Odessa

Johann (Haenschen) - born 1881 or 1882, died age 2 of diphtheria

Olga - born 1885

Paul - born about 1887, served in *Sanitaetsdienst*

Dima - born about 1888, died of whooping cough age 3 in Odessa

1873 appointed teacher at the Halbstadt *Zentralschule*

1874 achieved State Elementary School Certificate in Odessa

Continued teaching at the *Zentralschule* in Halbstadt, being principal 1880-1886

September 1886 to June 1888 lived in Wohldemfuerst, Kuban

1888 to March 1896 lived in Odessa

Although there were some Mennonites in Odessa, Friesen's primary responsibility was to the Stundists and to German Baptists. He described himself as the pastor of a German Baptist congregation.

In many ways this was a difficult period because of the suspicion of the Stundists and the extreme opposition toward them by the Orthodox Church. Stundism was a revival movement beginning in the Ukraine in the latter part of the nineteenth century, largely as the result of the influence of pietistic Mennonites and Lutherans.

This time was also difficult because of his family; Agatha and Dima died during this period

1896 to 1898 he recuperated on Estate Ober-Maitschokrak of friend Peter Heese

1898 to 1911 lived in Sevastopol, lived on his "independent means"

Household large, 3 children, a niece, a number of foster children, one named Caroline;

in 1902 had 17 boarders, mostly students in various phases of their education

Organized a house church, which officially existed 1904-1910

Involved on political organizations:

Own party, "Union of Freedom, Truth and Peace" called the "Frizen Party"

Also for a time joined the Kadet Party

In the meantime writing a history of the Mennonite Brethren Church, finally published by

Raduga in 1911

Involved in Inter-Mennonite organizations, was a member of the *KfK*

Moved to Tiege, Molotschna in 1911

Died 19 October 1914 in Tiege

Hausknecht, David

From Gnadenfeld, Molotschna

Studied medicine at the University of Odessa

Practiced in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna

Taught nursing students in Halbstadt 1916

Liebig, August

Abram Unger, of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Chortitza, had asked August Liebig of

Hamburg, Germany, to help the struggling MB Church in the 1860s

The Chortitza Administrative authorities had Liebig arrested, sent to Ekaterinoslav, then

to Odessa, then expelled out of the country
Liebig was later (1876) pastor of a church in the Odessa region

Neufeld, Abraham Abraham

Born 15 March 1862 in Fuerstenau, Molotschna

Parents Abraham Neufeld and Maria Fast

His father recognized his talents and sent him to the Ohrloff *Zentralschule*

Having completed the 3-year course in 2 years he entered *Realschule* in Berdyansk, supporting himself by giving private lessons

After he was married he did journalistic work

Wife **Mrs Neufeld**

Children:

Vera

Eugene

In 1883 took philological course at the University of Odessa

Tended to study on his own; had an unusual capacity and love for work

After 3 years in Odessa he spent 2 years at the University of Berlin

For a number of years secondary school teacher in Berdyansk and Bachmut

1890-1905 was principal of the Chortitza *Zentralschule*

Entrusted with the supervision of the elementary and secondary school system in the Chortitza Colony

Did some writing and lecturing, such as *Die Chortitza Zentralschule 1842-1892*, which was published in 1893

Moved to Berdyansk to provide educational opportunities for his own children

Founded *Realschule* in Berdyansk in 1905

Died 9 January 1909 of a stroke

Neufeld, Peter Jakob

Born 1824

Teacher, on a substitute basis, at Gnadenfeld *Zentralschule*

Unable to go to university, but went to Odessa, where he taught at a school, and studied Russian

Roomed at the pension of well-known Swiss educator Knoerri

Married daughter of Elder Friederich W Lange

Teacher in a private school on Steinbach Estate

Teacher Halbstadt *Zentralschule*

Founder of printing establishment in Halbstadt, *Raduga*

Died 1909

Penner, Johann

Graduate of the Chortitza *Zentralschule*, then taught *Dorfschule* in Blumengart

Three years private study at University of Leipzig and in Odessa

Then secretary of the *Forstei* organization

Peters, Peter

From Chortitza

Studied medicine at the University of Odessa

Practiced in Ekaterinoslav and Gruenfeld
Married Maria Esau, 2 children
Eventually exiled and likely died 1938
(see also Maria Esau from Ekaterinoslav)

Thiessen, Isaak

Studied medicine at the University of Odessa
Medical officer at the Bethania Mental Institution at Alt-Kronsweide, Chortitza
Worked at the institution from its beginning in 1910, and continued to do so until it was
flooded when the Dneproges dam flooded the region in 1926
He advocated to the government that the institution should be transferred to Halbstadt,
but this advice was not accepted

Toews, Jacob

A resident of Odessa who was editor of *Odessaer Zeitung* for some time in the 1880s

Unruh, Kornelius Benjamin

Born 1849 in Waldheim, Molotschna
Graduated from Halbstadt *Zentralschule*, where his teacher was Gustav Rempel
Started teaching on an estate, then Blumenort, Molotschna
During summers he studied privately in Ekaterinoslav, Kiev and Odessa, learning Russian,
French and educational methods
1870 accepted position in Halbstadt *Zentralschule*
Interrupted teaching with further education in Switzerland, then the winter of 1872-1873 in
Moscow
Then was principal and teacher at the Ohrloff *Zentralschule* for 32 years
Involved in publishing religious and historical texts
Established a secondary school and Bible school; tremendous capacity for work
Died 17 August 1910

Wieler, Johann Johann

Graduate of the Chortitza *Zentralschule*, Heinrich Franz one of his teachers
A number of years as assistant for the *Fuersorgekomitee* in Odessa
Had government elementary school teaching certificate
Taught in private school in Friedensfeld, then Nikopol
Established a small private school (presumably elementary school) in Nikopol
Was in Nikopol by 1876, then left to teach at the Halbstadt *Zentralschule* 1879-1883
Then became itinerant minister, then minister in Rumania

Zacharias, Dietrich

From Osterwick, Chortitza
Studied medicine at the University of Odessa
Medical Practice in Chortitza

STUDENTS AT THE VARIOUS SCHOOLS IN ODESSA

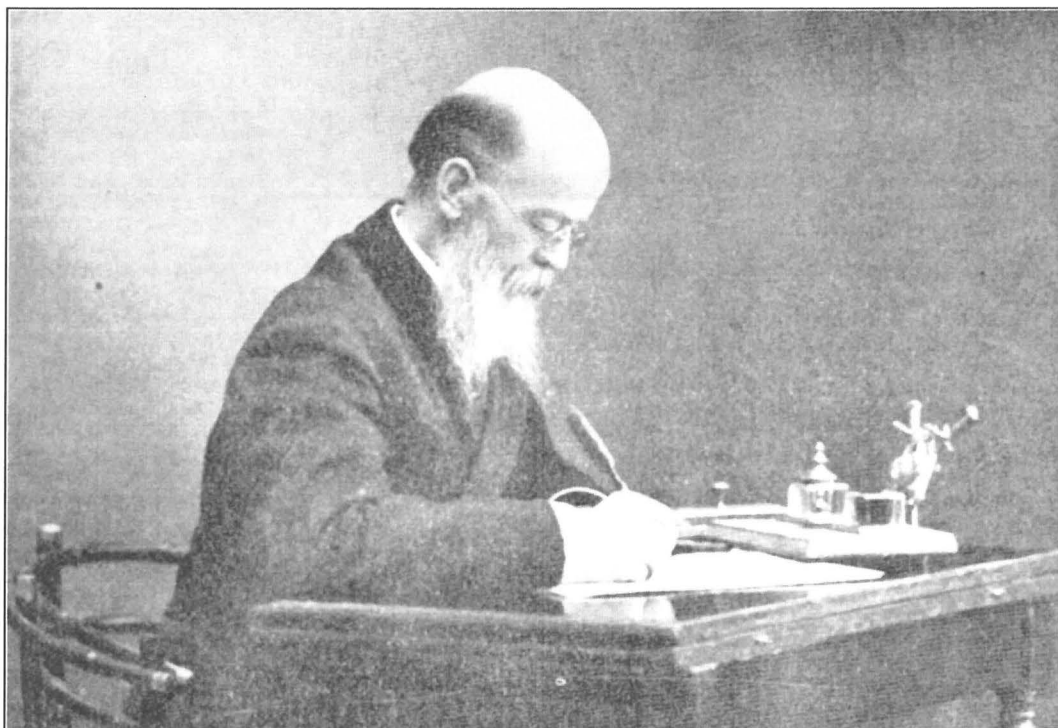
Esau, Peter J - Ekaterinoslav, University of Odessa, medicine, practiced in Ohrloff
Duerksen, Gerhard David - New Russian University of Odessa, medicine, on staff Ohrloff
Hospital
Friesen, Abram Abram - Schoenau, Molotschna, University of Odessa, teacher/professor, taught
in Halbstadt
Friesen, Peter Martin - Sparrau, Molotschna, studied in Odessa, teacher/professor/historian
1874 achieved State Elementary School Certificate in Odessa
Hausknecht, David - Gnadenfeld, Molotschna, University of Odessa, medicine, practiced in
Gnadenfeld and at Morija Nursing School in Halbstadt
Neufeld, Abraham Abraham - Fuerstenau, Molotschna, University of Odessa (1883),
teacher/professor, taught in Chortitza and Berdyansk
Neufeld, Peter Jakob - from Gnadenfeld, taught in some school, and studied Russian
Peters, Peter - Chortitza, University of Odessa, medicine, practiced in Ekaterinoslav and
Gruenfeld
Unruh, Kornelius Benjamin - Waldheim, during summers studied privately in Ekaterinoslav,
Kiev and Odessa, learning Russian, French and educational methods, published
books, established Bible school
Thiessen, Isaak - University of Odessa, medicine, practiced in Bethania Mental Institution
1910-1926
Zacharias, Dietrich - Osterwick, Chortitza, University of Odessa, medicine, practiced in
Chortitza

University of Odessa (New Russia University)

An institution of higher learning was established in Odessa in 1865 on the basis of the "Richelieu Lyceum" on the initiative of N Pirogov. Czarist officials initially opposed the founding of a university in Odessa. It was considered to be a hotbed of unrest.

There were initially three faculties: History and Philology, Physics and Mathematics, and Law. Enrollment began at 175 students, then by 1880 rose to 346, with 45 professors. A faculty of Medicine was added in 1900. In 1908 the total student enrollment was 3,100. All instruction was in Russian, although in 1906 there was an attempt to teach a Ukrainian history course.

At least eleven Mennonites are recorded as having studied in Odessa, six of these in the faculty of medicine.



Peter Martin Friesen (1849-1914)

P M Friesen was a student in Odessa about 1869,
then lived there 1888-1896

A A Neufeld was a student at the
University of Odessa 1883-1886,
studying in the Philology Department



Abraham Abraham Neufeld
(1862-1909)

Dr David Hausknecht and Dr Isaak Thiessen graduated from the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Odessa



Staff at Morija Nursing School in Halbstadt in 1915. Seated l to r: Maria Wall, then Manager J Friesen, Head Nurse Vera Michelson and Dr David Hausknecht



Staff at the Bethania Mental Institution, Alt-Kronsweide, with medical officer Dr Isaak Thiessen with dark suit in the middle

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Chapter VII

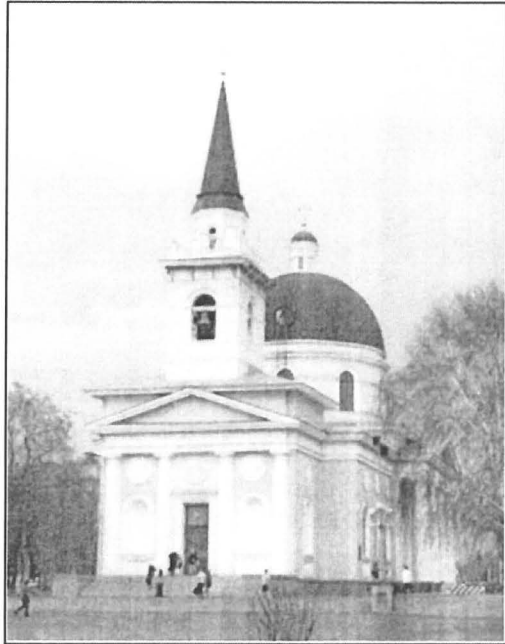
OMSK (the city of the Exiled)

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HISTORY OF OMSK

Omsk began as a wooden fort erected in 1716 to protect the expanding Russian Empire against the Kirghiz nomads of the steppes. It was built on the Irtysh River, at its junction with the smaller Om River. In the late 1700s stronger brick works were constructed on the right bank of the Om. Of these structures the original Tobolsk and the restored Tara gates still stand, as well as the



St Nicholas Cathedral

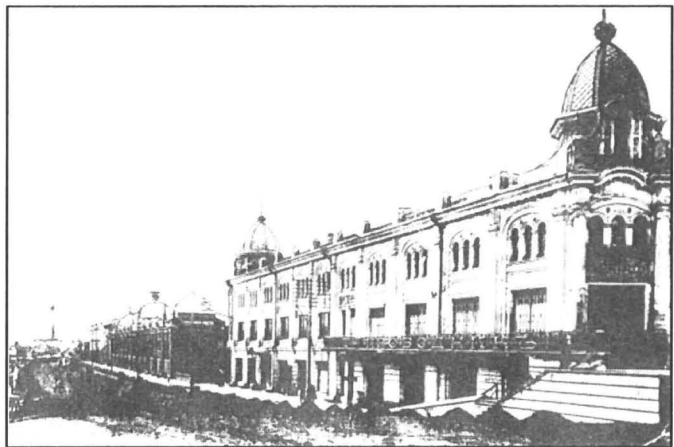
original Lutheran Church, a military jail, an armory and the commandant's house. Omsk acquired the status of a town in 1782. While not mentioned in the history books, "Omsk" actually means "city of the exiled, or of the banned" reflecting the practise during Czarist times of exiling people to Siberia, often to this region.

In the 1800s and the early 1900s Omsk became the administrative centre of Western Siberia and Kazakhstan. A few churches, cathedrals and houses of worship of a number of denominations were built, as well as a governor-general's mansion and a military academy. Construction of the Trans Siberian Railway 1895-1900 initiated a new boom, with merchants, factories and many places of business settling in this rail-river junction. The British, Dutch and Germans opened consulates to represent their business interests. The lavish Siberian Exposition of Agriculture and Industry was the pinnacle of commercial success, giving Omsk the name of the "Chicago of Siberia." Lyubinsky Avenue was considered to be the "Moscow" merchant row. An additional

advantage for Omsk was the construction of the Tyumen-Omsk railway line, a more direct connection from Omsk to St Petersburg and the Baltic ports. It was built between 1909-1913.

Two Mennonites, Petkau and Epp from New York of the Ignatyev Mennonite Colony, visited Omsk in late May of 1904. They described 20 dealers of agricultural machinery, four steam-powered flour mills, large warehouses with all types of products, many large stores as well as smaller shops. You could basically buy whatever was needed. The city was expanding. Three years previously a Mr Harder had built a steam-powered flour mill outside of the city limits; now it was one verst inside the city! There were six large businesses dealing with butter, as well as a number of smaller establishments.

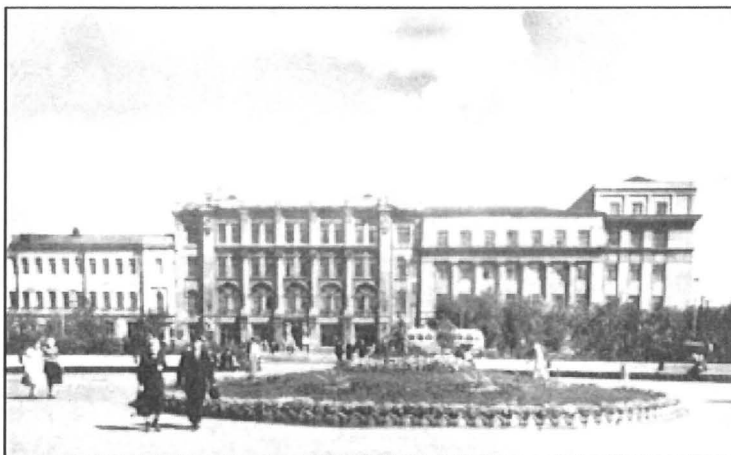
During this time of flourishing



Lyubinski Avenue in the late 1800s

business, Mennonites also moved in to participate in the boom. Peter J Wiens and his wife Justina from Schoenau, Molotschna, are the first Mennonites known to have settled in Siberia. Wiens established a general store and a business selling agricultural machinery. Other businessmen soon followed. For a brief time there was even a Mennonite elementary school, having 18 students in 1913. In 1924 the *Mennoverband* was organized to represent Mennonite interests.

From June 1918 to November 1919 Omsk was the residence of Admiral A V Kolchak, the High Regent of Russia. He proclaimed Omsk to be the capital not only of Siberia, but of all Russia. The Central Bank kept the Imperial



Omsk buildings and park in the late 1800s

gold reserves, guarded by a Czechoslovakian garrison trapped there in the chaos of the end of World War I. Eventually Admiral Kolchak, the government and the gold retreated along the Trans Siberian Railway eastward to Irkutsk. The Red forces took control of the area in November of 1919.



The opening of a new permanent bridge on the Trans Siberian Railway in 1911

With the Soviet takeover Novonikolaevsk (now Novosibirsk) was designated as the centre for Western Siberia, so many of the administrative, cultural and educational functions were transferred there from Omsk. The city recovered to some degree when many industries were evacuated from Russia's western front during World War II. In the event of German

victory in the Battle of Moscow, Omsk was to be the provisional Soviet capitol. The significant military presence in the city as a result of this had the disadvantage of keeping the city closed to foreigners until 1990.

During World War II Omsk seems to have been the residence of Mennonites in dispersion or exile. Letters came from the city to the West, for example from Agatha Klassen, formerly from Nieder-Chortitza and Peter Baerg, formerly from Ufa. In the 1930s and 1940s a number of Mennonites studied medicine in Omsk. Pictures of graduates of the *Omsk Medizinische Hochschule* show that at least eight completed the course between 1939 and 1949. Presumably this was a technical training school, not an actual university faculty.

After the war some industries continued production in Omsk. Development of oil and natural gas facilities prompted development of an oil refining complex, the largest such complex in Russia. Other industries include machine and machine-tool manufacture, electrical engineering and electronics, producing space rockets, engines and agricultural machinery. Being a rail centre makes

locomotive and rail-car depots a natural. Unfortunately the former party elite, new businessmen and the criminal world have vied for control of the city's most profitable enterprises, stifling much-needed actual development.

There are 30 institutions of higher education or their branches in Omsk, including a number of universities, such as the Omsk State Transport University and the University of Engineering. The Omsk Symphony Orchestra and the Omsk State Folk Choir delight the music lovers, while the Omsk Avangard hockey team pleases the sports fans, especially since they were the Russian champions in 2004.

The population of Omsk was 31,000 in 1881, rising to 53,050 by 1900, then to 1,134,016 in 2002. It is the second largest city in the Siberian Federal District, and is 2,700 kilometres from Moscow. It is the capital of Omsk Oblast. The area is 573 square kilometres, and the elevation is 87 metres. It has typical continental climate with wide swings in temperature, averaging 20°C in July and -19°C in January. Annual precipitation is 315 millimetres (13 inches), and there are over 300 sunny days per year.



Omsk Drama Theatre

Currently there are a number of functioning churches in Omsk. One congregation, which calls itself Baptist, largely stems from Mennonite Brethren roots, with Nikolai Dueckmann the pastor. He gives the typical story of having been in prison for 4½ years, but is now the dynamic leader of this “Low German Baptist” church. There is a flourishing conference of 73 churches in the region, having 1,760 members, with 3,560 attending the 54 sanctuaries on Sunday mornings.

MENNONITES IN SIBERIA

Siberia, the part of Russia between the Ural Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, is an almost endless expanse of forests, muskeg, steppes and desert. Wide rivers such as the Ob, Yenisey and Lena flow north into the Arctic Ocean. The 4,887,223 square miles extend across six time zones and are a million square miles larger than Canada.

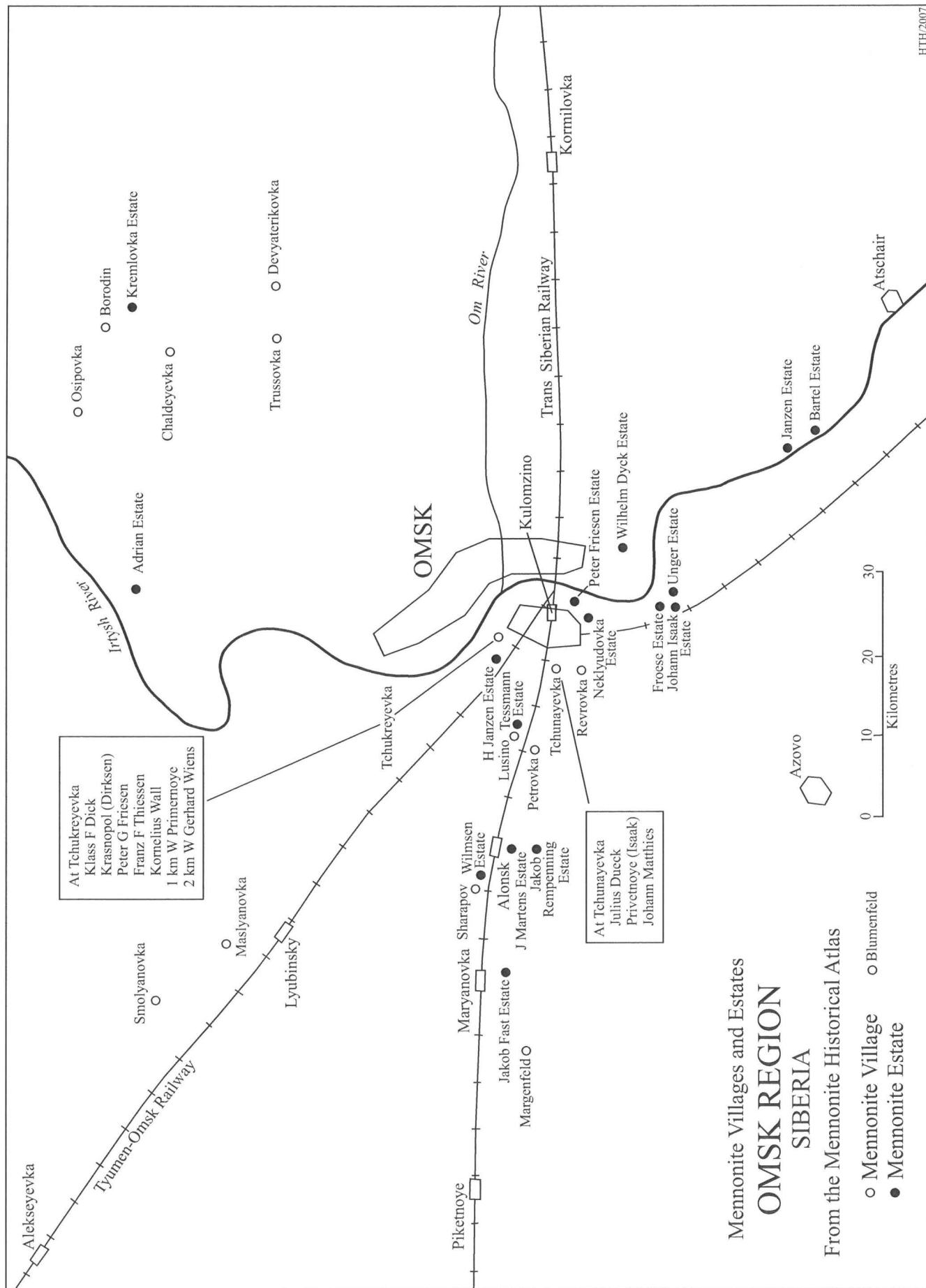
The first Mennonite known to have settled in Siberia was Peter Johann Wiens, of Schoenau, Molotschna, who opened a general store and a business selling agricultural machinery in Omsk in 1897. He was rapidly followed by other businessmen and farmers who settled near the Trans Siberian Railway from Petropavlovsk to Omsk. The Omsk Mennonite Settlement consisted of about 29 villages and many estates, with a total population of about 5,000. There were many village schools, a number of church buildings, and even a *Zentralschule* and a *Forstei* station.

Other areas of settlement in Siberia were Barnaul (Slavgorod), with 58 villages and at least 13,000 people, Pavlodar with 12 villages and about 2,800 people, Minusinsk, with 2 villages, in Yenisei province, and later settlements along the Amur River in the far east.

Many of the Mennonites from the Amur Settlement escaped to Harbin in China over the Amur River ice about 1930. Some settlers from other Siberian colonies immigrated to Canada in the 1920s, but many remained. A number were among the 13,000 Mennonites who attempted to obtain exit visas in Moscow in 1929, but most were turned back. With the German invasion of Russia in 1941 many Mennonites were deported from Ukraine, but the front never approached the major Siberian Mennonite settlements, so most stayed in their homes.

During the whole Communist era, exile to labour camps in Siberia was, of course, a dreaded sentence. Many thousands of Mennonites were sentenced; very few made it back to their homes alive, and those who did were in very poor health.

Today there is an active Mennonite church presence in Siberia, especially in the area around Omsk. There is an offspring organization of the Mennonite Brethren; from 1907 to 1957 it was called Mennonite Brethren, then in order to better attract neighbouring Russians they changed the name to "Evangelical Christian Baptist Church." Currently this federation has 73 large and small congregations in the Omsk region, with 1,760 members. About 3,560 people attend the 54 church sanctuaries every Sunday. Long meetings, with much singing is the common practise; they also continue with the Songfest (*Saengerfest*) tradition, with up to 4,000 people attending. All elders and church officials are, of course, men. A number of the leaders have served long prison sentences.



LIST OF PEOPLE

(People who at one time lived in Omsk)

(Each name will appear in **bold** print only once)

It should be noted that sometimes it was difficult to determine if the people actually lived in the city of Omsk, or in the Omsk region. This list is meant to mention those who supposedly lived in the city itself. In total 57 Mennonites were found to have lived or worked in Omsk.

Baerg, Annie

Youngest sister of Peter Baerg, lived in Omsk in 1954, but not in Peter's household

Baerg, Peter

Formerly from Ufa

Lived in Omsk with family members when he wrote a letter to his sister Elisabeth (Liese)

3 January 1954

3 sons, 2 daughters all single. The youngest, age 13 years, still going to school, the others all working

Sara, Peter's sister, was acting as housekeeper

Dueckmann, Nikolai

Pastor of "Low German Baptist Church" in Omsk in 2006

Spent 4½ years in prison

He actually lives in a neighbouring village Marianovka

Epp, Jakob

From Ivanovka

Worked in Omsk after the Revolution

Diligently represented the Mennonites in Omsk

Epp, Jakob

Born 28 October 1915 in Ivanovka, Omsk region

Parents Jakob H Epp and Katharina Schellenberg

Elder brother of Johann J Epp

Graduated from *Omsk Medizinische Hochschule* in 1939

Epp, Johann (Hans)

Born 5 July 1914 in Ivanovka

Cousin of Johann Jakob Epp

Graduated from *Omsk Medizinische Hochschule* in 1940

Epp, Johann (Hans) Jakob

Born 14 October 1920 in Ivanovka, Omsk region

Parents Jakob H Epp and Katharina Schellenberg, younger brother of Johann J Epp

Imprisoned 1941-1946

Graduated from *Omsk Medizinische Hochschule* in 1949

In the class picture of 1948, he is the only male in a class of 12

Married **Anna Isaak** in 1949; children **Eleonore** (1950), **Viktor** (1951), **Katharina** (1958)

First lived in Krutinka, then to Issyl Kul in 1956, to Omsk in 1967 and Bendry in 1978

Migrated To Germany in 1983

Ewert, Heinrich

Maria (wife)

Said to be pioneers in Omsk, 1899

He was pastor of the MB Church in Tschunayevka

Froese, Franz Peter

Anna (nee Lepp) wife

Franz

Katharina

Aron

Franz worked as a bookkeeper for his father-in-law's companies, the flour mill and then the farm implement factory

1914 the family moved onto an estate bought for them by Aron Lepp, 12 miles south of Omsk

Harder, Mr

Built a steam-powered flour mill in 1901 outside of the city of Omsk

By 1904 the city had expanded so that the mill was now 1v inside the city limits

Hildebrand, Jakob

Son-in-law of Peter Johann Wiens

Worked as an official in a bank in Omsk

Huebert, Johann (Hans)

Graduated from *Omsk Medizinische Hochschule* in 1940

Isaak, Abram

Born 26 September 1908 in Nikolaifeld, Siberia

Graduated from *Omsk Medizinische Hochschule* in 1939

Isaak, Johann J

Maria (wife)

Konstantin - born about 1913

Waldemar - born about 1916

Margaretha - born about 1918

Natalie - died early

Johann was born 27 May 1884 in Tiege, Molotschna

Parents Johann Philipp Isaak and Katharina Janz

Elementary school in Tiege, *Zentralschule* in Ohrloff

Baptized at the age of 16, likely by his grandfather, Elder Jakob Janz in Friedensfeld, and accepted as member of the Mennonite Brethren Church

Gymnasium in Ekaterinoslav for further studies

Completed studies in medicine at the Military Academy at St Petersburg in 1910

December 1911 married Maria Verich

1910-1912 practiced as a physician

1912 started specialized training in ophthalmology in St Petersburg

With outbreak of World War I (1914) he was designated as a military physician in Omsk, also starting a private practice in that city

Went to Harbin in 1923, following his family, which was already there. He left Russia in part because of the deteriorating conditions, and he wanted to provide a more

stable environment for his family
In Harbin he could also provide medical care for eye problems of the Russian people
living in the area, but soon he was also treating wealthier Chinese and diplomats
In the early 1930s he helped many of the Mennonite refugees in the city, also providing
contacts to help them escape to North and South America
Refugee Anna Klassen worked as tutor in the Isaak home
Worked in Harbin until 1951, when the Communist takeover made things difficult
Were able to immigrate to the United States in 1952, settling in California, close to
their two sons who had settled there
After 2 years became seriously ill, and died 31 August 1956, in Vallejo, California

Isaak, Peter

Born 25 October 1913 in Nikolaifeld, Siberia
Graduated from *Omsk Medizinische Hochschule* in 1939

Klassen, Aganetha

Formerly from Nieder-Chortitza, daughter of Johann Rempel
Wrote letter from Omsk to sister Helene in Austria, dated 4 March 1955

Children:

Hilda
Elsa
Alvin
Harry

All lived in one room in Omsk, the 4 children working, mother Aganetha cleaning the room
and making the meals

Married sons live a distance away, so likely not in Omsk

They were:

Jasch (Jakob) and Ira, have 3 children
Gerhard and Anna, have 2 children

Comments that the room is warm, that they have enough to eat and drink, and enough clothing
Praises God that they were all healthy

Koop, Jakob J

Participated in All-Russian Mennonite Agricultural Union conference in Davlekanovo
24-30 June 1924

Lehn, Mr

Assisted Aron Abram Rempel in the establishment of the Omsk branch of the ARMAU

Lepp, Aron Aron

Katharina (nee Froese) wife (died in 1911)
Built a five-story steam-powered flour mill in 1909; did not do well, so he sold it in 1912
Built a farm implement factory in 1912

Regier, Abram

From Waldheim, Siberia
Graduated from *Omsk Medizinische Hochschule* in 1940

Rempel, Aron Abram

Teacher

One of the founding members of the Omsk branch of the All-Russian Mennonite Agricultural Union, assisted by businessmen Unger and Lehn
Participated in All-Russian Mennonite Agricultural Union conference in Davlekanovo
24-30 June 1924

Unger, Mr

Assisted Aron Abram Rempel in the establishment of the Omsk branch of the ARMAU

Wiebe, Mr

He taught in the Mennonite school in Omsk in 1913; 18 pupils

Wiens, Johann Peter

Wife, Mrs Wiens

Owner of store selling books and stationery

Sold German and Russian Bibles, Mennonite and Lutheran songbooks, German and Russian religious and schoolbooks

Handled all Raduga Publishers material

Advertised in *Christlicher Familienkalender* 1912, p 216

Wiens, Peter Johann

Justina (wife)(nee Janzen)

Abram

Cornelius

Peter

Katharina

Originally from Schoenau, Molotschna, moved to Rueckenau, Kleefeld and Ladekopp, then to Omsk in 1897

First known Mennonite to have settled in Siberia

Had a general store in the Mokraya district, in central Omsk, managed by his youngest daughter Katharina

In time opened another 2 general stores

Also had a business selling agricultural machines. In time the factories established their own outlets, so eventually Wiens stopped selling their machines, but continued dealing in wagons and buggies built in Mennonite factories

Business in Omsk grew rapidly and he built a large two-story building on the Vtoroy Vsvos in Makraya; family lived on the second story

With this building he consolidated the three general stores into one, thereby saving on paper work, insurance and business taxes

Established a branch of the farm implement store in Slavgorod, managed by one of his sons

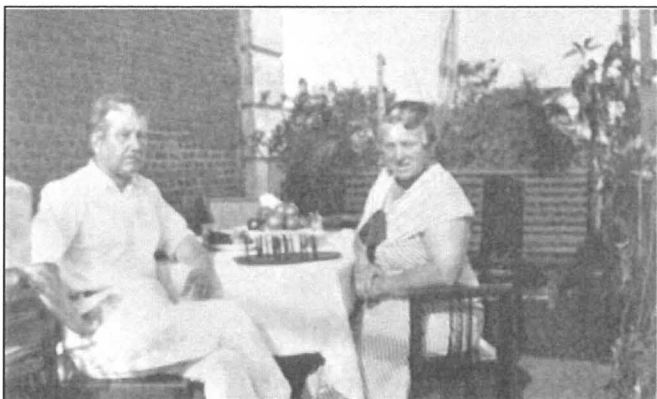
He also leased a considerable amount of land, at 3 kopecs/dess/year. He had the land worked by hired hands

All his property was confiscated after the Revolution

Wilms, Johann (Hans) K

From Waldheim, Siberia

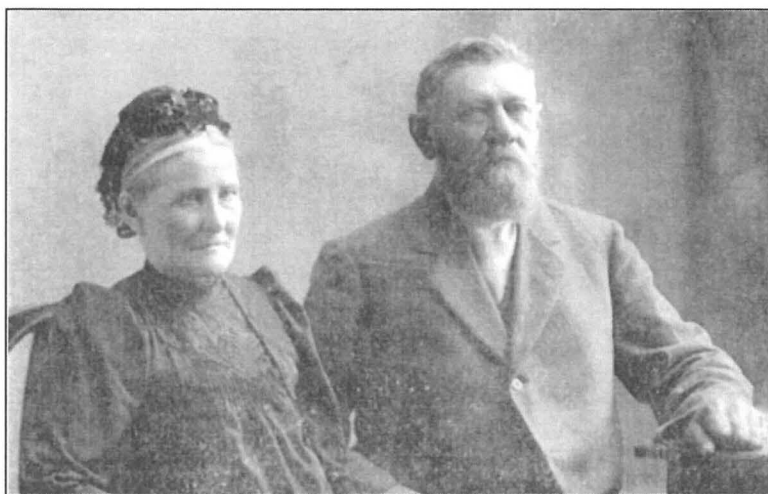
Graduated from *Omsk Medizinische Hochschule* in 1940



Dr Johann Isaak and his wife Maria in Omsk,
later in Harbin, China



Heinrich and Maria Ewert,
pioneers in 1899. Probably
lived in Tchunayevka



Peter Johann Wiens and his wife Justina (nee Janzen)



Omsk Medical College class in 1948
Hans Epp in the middle
Graduated in 1949



Dr Johann (Hans) Epp family in 1961. Front row
l to r: wife Anna, Katharina, Johann, back row
l to r: Eleonore, Viktor

MENNONITE INSTITUTIONS

All-Russian Mennonite Agricultural Union

An Omsk affiliate of the ARMAU was founded likely in 1924

Founder and first chairman Teacher Aron Abram Rempel

Assistants businessmen Unger and Lehn

Later Jakob Heinrich Epp of Ivanovka was elected president

Despite its short time of existence it significantly helped the agricultural and business communities

German Teachers of West Siberia Conference

Not a Mennonite conference, but attended by Mennonite teachers

Anticipated that it would present strong Communist propaganda

Attended by Peter Boldt and Johann Rempel of Slavgorod as well as Gerhard Fast

Two professors from the University of Tomsk were featured

The first professor started by declaring that he was a Christian, and would remain a Christian despite all circumstances

A teacher from Germany declared that the Ten Commandments must be taught; they were the foundation of all human life

Mennonite Elementary School

Teacher Wiebe in 1913

18 students in 1913

Not sure how long it continued, but was said not to have functioned very long



Mennonite elementary school in Omsk in 1913 with
Teacher Wiebe and 18 students

MENNONITE BUSINESSES

Lepp, Aron Aron Flour Mill

Left Barvenkovo, where he was a partner in a large flour mill
Sold out to his 2 partners in 1909, moved to Omsk, and built a flour mill of his own
His son-in-law, Franz Peter Froese, was bookkeeper
Did not prosper, so he sold the mill in 1912

Lepp, Aron Aron Farm Implement Factory

In 1912 Aron Lepp sold his flour mill, and built a farm implement factory
Son-in-law Franz Peter Froese, was bookkeeper
Not certain how long the factory continued to function

Wiens, Johann Peter

Owner of store selling books and stationery, certainly by 1912
Sold German and Russian Bibles, Mennonite and Lutheran songbooks, German and Russian religious and schoolbooks
Handled all Raduga Publishers material
Advertized in *Christlicher Familienkalendar* 1912, p 216

Wiens, Peter J

Moved to Omsk in 1897, first known Mennonite to have settled in Siberia
Established a general store, and a store for farm machinery in Makraya; he also farmed some land
Eventually had three general stores in Omsk
Business in Omsk grew rapidly and he built a large two-story building on the Vtoroy Vsvos in Makraya; family lived on the second story. He incorporated all three general stores in this building, to save on book work and city taxes
Later established a branch of the farm implement store in Slavgorod, managed by one of his sons
All his property was confiscated after the Revolution



Peter Wiens (middle) and wife and their children Abram, Kornelius and Peter, as well as some other businessmen in Omsk (unfortunately specific people not labelled)

Buch- und Schreibwarenhandlung Johann Petrow. Wiens, Omsk

empfehl und führt auf Lager: deutsche und russische Bibeln und Testamente, mennonitische und lutherische Gesangbücher, Heimatklänge, Zionslieder, Gemeinschaftslieder, Gusli u. andere russische und deutsche Liederbücher, Predigt-, Erbauungs- und Unterhaltungsbücher, deutsche und russische Schulbücher, Schreibutensilien, Kontor-, Notiz- und Kopierbücher, Wandsprüche, Fleißkärtchen, deutsche und russische. Die Verlagswerke der Firma „Raduga“ Halbstadt, sind beständig auf Lager. Bestellungen auf allgemein nützliche Bücher, sowie auf in- und ausländische Zeitschriften werden angenommen.

Man gebe gefl. Titel, Verfasser u. Verlag des gewünschten Buches an, den Betrag der Zeitschriften füge man der Bestellung bei. Um Mißverständnisse und Fehler vorzubeugen, gebe man bei Bahnsendung Bahnstation und Linie, bei Postsendung aber Poststation und Gouvernement genau an.

Johann Peter Wiens book and stationery store advertising in *Christlicher Familienkalendar* in 1912

OMSK INSTITUTIONS

Omsk Medical School (Medical Technical College?)

No record was found of Mennonites attending a medical school in Omsk during the Czarist times, but there were a number of graduates during the Communist era

After the Communist takeover a considerable number of Mennonites remained in the Omsk region of Siberia. A number graduated from medicine, and remarkably Johann Epp was accepted into the faculty of medicine, and graduated, even though he had served time in a concentration camp

Graduates of the Omsk *Medizinische Hochschule* were:

Epp, Jakob - born 28 October 1915 in Ivanovka, graduated in 1939

Epp, Johann (Hans) - born 5 July 1914, from Ivanovka, graduated in 1940

Epp, Johann (Hans) Jakob - born 14 October 1920, from Ivanovka, graduated in 1949

Huebert, Johann (Hans) - graduated in 1940

Isaak, Abram - born 26 September 1908, from Nikolaifeld, graduated in 1939

Isaak, Peter - born 25 October 1913, from Nikolaifeld, graduated in 1939

Regier, Abram - from Waldheim, graduated in 1940

Wilms, Johann (Hans), K - from Waldheim, graduated in 1939



Graduates of the Omsk Medical College 1939 and 1940
Front row l to r: Hans K Wilms, Peter Isaak, Abram Isaak,
Hans Epp. Back row l to r: Abram Regier, Jakob Epp,
Hans Huebert

VILLAGES AND ESTATES IN THE OMSK REGION
(within about 60 kilometres)

VILLAGES (16)

Blumenfeld	Osipovka
Borodin	Petrovka
Chaldeyevka	Revrovka
Devyaterikovka	Sharapov
Kulomzino	Smolyanovka
Lusino	Tchukreyevka
Margenfeld	Tchunayevka
Maslyanovka	Tussovka

ESTATES (26)

Size of Estate

Adrian.....?	
Bartel.....?	
Dick, Klass F.....?	
Dueck, Julius.....477 dess	
Dyck, Wilhelm.....600 dess	
Fast, Jakob.....?	
Friesen, Peter Gerhard.....240 dess	
Friesen, Peter Peter.....?	
Froese.....301 dess	
Isaak, Johann Peter.....400 dess	
Janzen.....?	
Janzen, Heinrich Franz.....900 dess	
Krasnopol (Dirksen).....112 dess	
Kremlovka.....114 dess	
Martens, J.....683 dess	
Matthies, Johann.....?	
Neklyudovka.....800 dess	
Primernoye.....?	
Privetnoye (Isaak).....?	
Rempenning, Jakob.....2,000 dess	
Tessmann.....2,000 dess	
Thiessen, Franz Franz.....100 dess	
Unger.....1,450 dess	
Wall, Kornelius.....160 dess	
Wiens, Gerhard.....200 dess	
Wilmsen.....400 dess	

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Chapter VIII

ST PETERSBURG PETROGRAD LENINGRAD ST PETERSBURG

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HISTORY OF ST PETERSBURG

St Petersburg (in Russian St Peterburg) was founded 16 May 1703 by Peter the Great, to give Russia a window onto the Baltic Sea. It is situated on the delta of the Neva River, the city at one time spreading across nearly 100 islands and onto adjacent parts of the mainland flood plain. It was called St Petersburg from 1703 to 1914, then Petrograd from 1914 to 1924, then Leningrad from 1924 to 1991, thereafter by a narrow margin of 54% back to St Petersburg.



The Peter and Paul Fortress

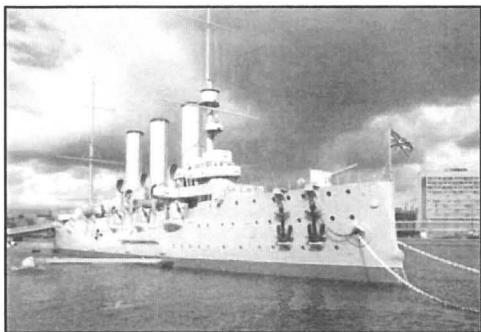
From 1712 to 1918 St Petersburg was the capital of the Russian Empire, the home of the Czar. As such government offices were located there, the Czar and the nobility built a large number of palaces, and to allow traffic a profusion of bridges was constructed, today totalling 342. During this time Mennonite delegations travelled to St Petersburg to make various presentations. This would include Hoeppner and Bartsch (1787) dealing with the first settlement of Mennonites in South Russia, Johann Claassen (1860-1862) petitioning for legal rights for the M B Church and Elder Leonhard Sudermann (1871) negotiating possible terms for Mennonites regarding military service. In the late 1800s and the early 1900s many Mennonites attended the University of St Petersburg as well as other institutions of higher

learning. The Peter and Paul Fortress was a much feared prison during Czarist times, but also in the Communist era, when number of Mennonites were incarcerated there.

Some of the nobility of the Russian Empire had sympathy with, or were themselves Christians, so St Petersburg was a centre for Christian developments in Russia in the early twentieth century. There was a connection with religious movements in Britain through persons such as Lord Radstock and Percy Grubb. Mennonites, for instance Jakob Kroeker of Halbstadt, actually knew some of these people. The Russian Bible Society was based in St Petersburg.



Statue of Nicholas I and St Isaac's Cathedral

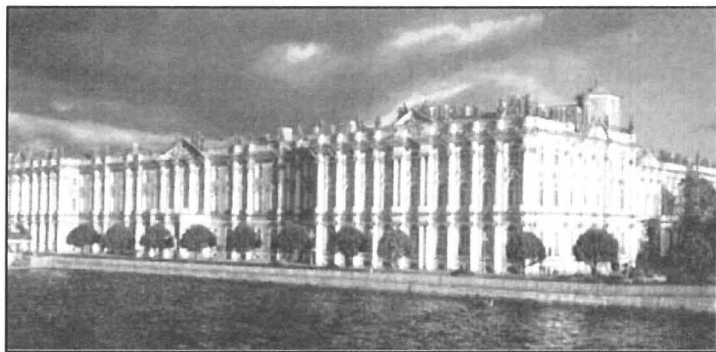


The Cruiser *Aurora*

St Petersburg was in the forefront of revolution as well. As early as January 1905 a general strike of workers was called. Ferment continued and developed into full-fledged revolution in 1917. The Provisional Government of Kerensky was formed in March, then even this was overthrown by the October Revolution. Sailors of the ship "Aurora" became a symbol of this event. With an unstable situation in St Petersburg Lenin fled to Moscow 5 March 1918; Moscow basically became the capital of Russia since then. On 24 January 1924, three days after the death of Lenin, the city was renamed Leningrad. During the Civil

War the city's commerce and industry came to a virtual standstill; the population by 1920 fell to 772, 000.

A number of noteworthy events have brought Leningrad to prominence since then. The city was besieged by the German *Wehrmacht* during World War II, for 900 days, from 8 September 1941

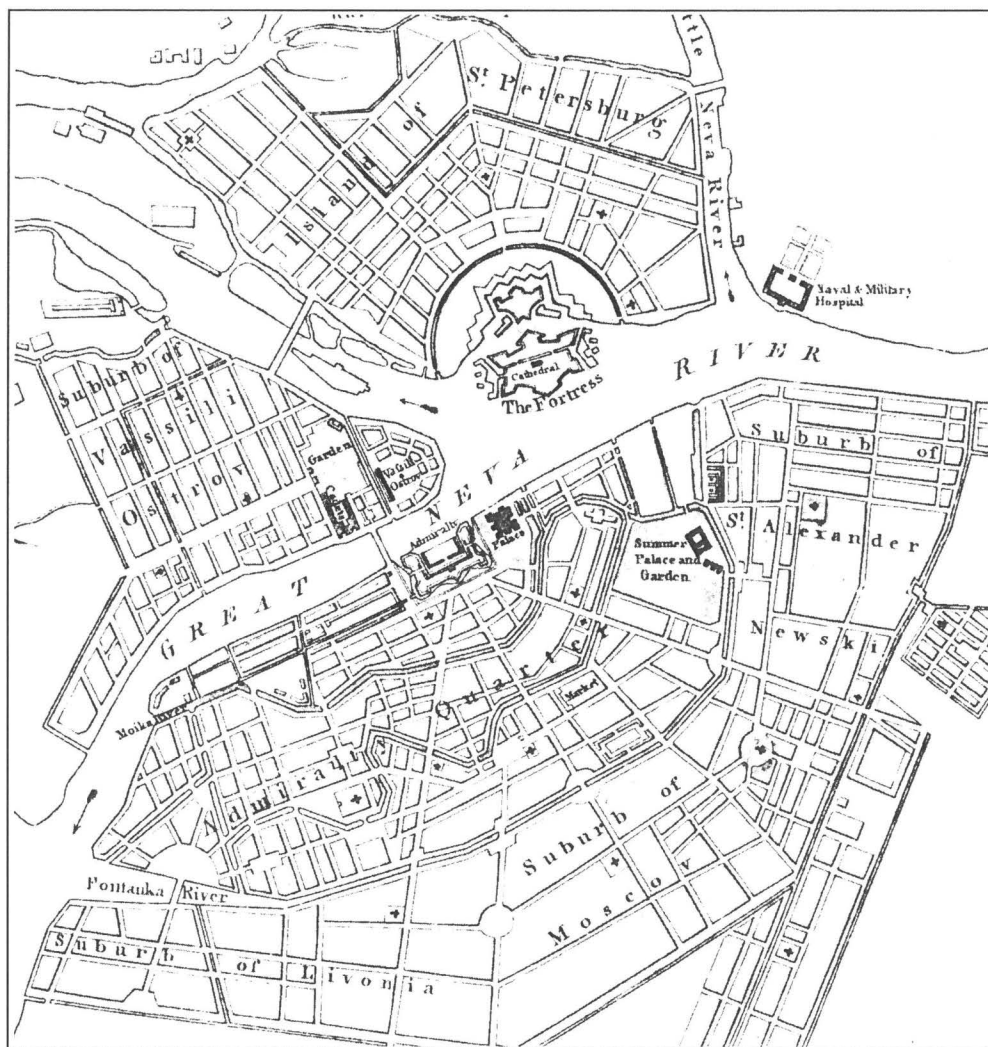


The Winter Palace - Hermitage

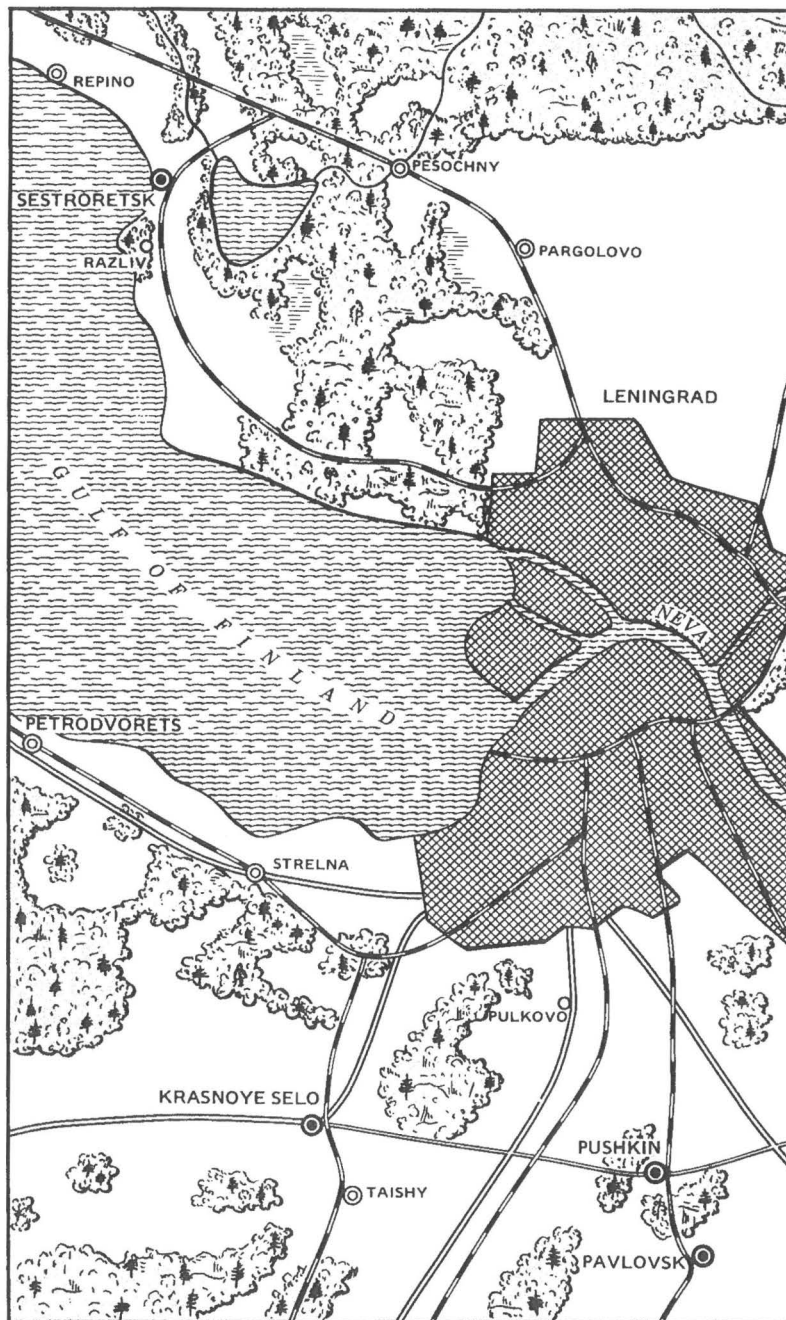
to 27 January 1944. There was much destruction, and about 800,000 of the 3,000,000 inhabitants died. There were some Mennonites living in Leningrad at the time, notably members of the Ediger family. A number of them were among those who died, from "starvation and the cold." The Leningrad Affair of 1948 was a sudden sweeping purge of the Communist Party and government officials of Leningrad, probably to some degree engineered by contenders for the

leadership, using the paranoia of Stalin to achieve their ends. As a tourist destination St Petersburg is probably best known for the "Hermitage," a first-class museum and art gallery housed in the old Czarist Winter Palace. There are institutions of higher learning which attract students, including a Christian University. This would, of course, have been impossible during Communist times.

St Petersburg has a population of 4,661,219 (2002), and is Russia's second largest city. Its area is 1,439 square kilometres, and the elevation 3 metres. It is the northernmost large city in the world, being just a few kilometres south of the Arctic Circle.



Late eighteenth-century St Petersburg



Leningrad and environs in 1977

LIST OF PEOPLE

(People who at one time lived in St Petersburg)

(Each name will appear in **bold** print only once)

Mennonites lived or worked in St Petersburg for various reasons. Some had to transact business with various government departments. There were a number of Mennonite Duma representatives. The many educational institutions in St Petersburg attracted an increasing number of Mennonites. In total we were able to document 93 Mennonites as having spent a significant amount of time in St Petersburg

Bartsch, Johann

Born 6 September 1757

Lived in Nobel near Danzig, West Prussia

Chosen as one of the delegates to visit Russia to assess viability of migration

Together with Jakob Hoepfner travelled to Russia leaving Danzig 30 October 1786

Presented to Czarina Catherine II on 31 May 1787 in Kremenchug; travelled to the Crimea with the Czarina

Chose land near Kherson for the site of the settlement; headed north to St Petersburg to finalize the arrangements

Carriage they were travelling in tipped 2 August 1787, just before they reached St Petersburg; Hoepfner said to have fractured his leg

While waiting in St Petersburg met Paul, heir to the throne, and his wife Maria Feodorovna Hoepfner and Bartsch had audience with the Czarina 7 September 1787; she agreed to the terms proposed by the Mennonite delegates

Protocol demanded that all people receiving an audience wear socks; Hoepfner's leg was so swollen that he could not have worn shoes in any case!

Delegates headed for home, likely late September, arriving in Danzig 30 October 1787

Bergmann, Hermann Abram

Member of the Russian Duma

Born 1850 in Dirschau, West Prussia

Parents Abram Bergmann and Susanna Friesen

Moved to Russia in 1862

Became large estate owner (Bergmannsthal), in 1898 owning 4,090.5 dess, by 1908 9,712 dess

Entered local politics in 1890

Interested in education; was on the board of the Nikopol *Zentralschule*

Elected to the Third Duma in October 1907; he was one of the 160 Octobrist candidates who sat in the house; was on a number of Duma commissions

As Duma member he spent considerable time in St Petersburg; his wife, because of her health, did not accompany him

Re-elected to the Duma in 1912, again as an Octobrist

Elections for the Duma slated for 1917, but did not occur because of the Revolution

Felt he was in danger; tried to escape from his home in Ekaterinoslav when the Communist

forces approached, likely heading for the Crimea
Hermann and a number of travelling companions were captured, shot, and their bodies thrown
down a well, likely in late January 1919

Bergmann, Kornelius Peter

Graduate of the Ohrloff *Zentralschule* and the Halbstadt Pedagogical Institute
Dorfschule teacher for a number of years
Studied at the St Petersburg Pedagogical Institute, graduating in 1899
Taught German language at the Halbstadt *Zentralschule* 1899-1906
To the University of Jena in 1906
Some chronic illness, which by 1910 had not been cured

Block, Mr H

Student in St Petersburg in 1910

Block, Mr T

Student in St Petersburg in 1910

Braeul, Alexander

From Ohrloff, Molotschna
Student at the University of St Petersburg
Became teacher/professor, worked in Russia

Braun, Heinrich Jakob

Born 30 April 1873 in Alexanderwohl, Molotschna (elder brother of Peter)
Private instruction, then Hamburg Baptist Theological Seminary 1895-1899
MB minister, played a part in the formulation of the MB Confession of Faith
Owned some estates, but likely lived in Halbstadt most of the time
Involved with Raduga publishing house
Treasurer of the MB foreign mission program
Governor of Taurida province had a warrant out for his arrest
First fled to Moscow, then to Petrograd, and stayed there under the protection of
Prince Volkonsky from 1915 until April or May 1917
Taught in Bible School in Tchongrav 1918
1921 fled the country, eventually settling in Germany, where he died 24 June 1946

Braun, Peter Jakob

Born 9 February 1880 in Alexanderwohl, Molotschna
Graduated from Halbstadt *Zentralschule* and Teacher Training School
After having taught school enrolled in Teachers Institute in St Petersburg
Taught in schools in Halbstadt, including the *Maedchenschule* 1909 to 1914
Taught History, Geography and Science
Later principal of the Teacher Training School in Halbstadt
1924 left for Germany, where he died in 1933 of nephritis

Brieger, Mary

Born 7 June 1894 in Riga, Latvia
Parents Louis and Clara Brieger, who lived on a large estate in Latvia
Raised as a devout Lutheran, able student, exceptional memory
Knew German and Russian, even some French and English

Worked in Riga for a British shipping company Malcolms, in charge of foreign correspondence
Transferred during World War I to St Petersburg, and then to Moscow
Fell in love with student Jakob Reimer, good musician, and likely an engineering student
Possibly became acquainted with Jakob through his sisters, Sonya and Katya
(for continuation see Jakob Reimer entry)

Claassen, Johann

Born 27 July 1820 in Ohrlofferfelde, near Tiegenhof West Prussia
Parents David Klaassen and Aganetha Penner
Father died in Prussia 1827; shortly thereafter the family migrated to Russia via covered wagon, settling in Liebenau, Molotschna
Attended *Dorfschule*, then Halbstadt *Zentralschule*
Opened store in Liebenau with Cornelius Reimer
Inspired by Eduard Wuest, active in the founding of the *Bruderschule* in Gnadenfeld in 1857
Travelled to St Petersburg twice to clear up legal problems for the school
Participant in the organizational meeting, founding the M B Church 6 January 1860
Went to St Petersburg a number of times to deal with legal questions regarding the church
Spent much of the time between March 1860 and end of May 1862 in St Petersburg dealing with many officials and presenting many petitions
Finally on 15 May 1862 he presented a petition to the Czar, and received assurance that “ecclesiastical separation shall in no case incur a loss of civil rights or persecution by police authorities.”
At first stayed in the home of a tailor named Plonus in the suburbs, then moved to a more comfortable establishment nearer the centre of the city established by Countess Dettloff, called “House of Domontowitch” The address was Room 7, 36 Galeeren Street
Eventually the Mennonite Brethren felt that problems with authorities in the Molotschna and Chortitza Colonies could be best solved by moving away.
The Kuban Colony was established in the Caucasus; again Johann travelled to St Petersburg on a number of occasions to make the necessary arrangements
In 1869 Johann was elected *Oberschulze* of the Kuban Colony. In recognition of his contributions in the development of this colony he received a silver medal from the Czar in 1872, then a gold medal in 1874, as well as a gold watch.
Johann Claassen died 24 December 1876 in Wohldemfuerst, Kuban Colony, at the age of 56

Derksen, Mr G S

Student in St Petersburg in 1910

Dyck, Arnold

Born 1889 in Hochfeld, Chortitza
Studied in the Academy of Art in St Petersburg, as well as in Moscow, Munich and Stuttgart
Teacher of art for a few years in Nikopol
With his family he migrated to Canada in 1923
He was a pioneer in Canadian Mennonite writing in both High and Low German
Founded a literary journal and edited the *Echo Verlag* series of books on Mennonite history
“*Verloren in der Steppe*” and “*Koop enn Bua*” are among his best known writings
He died in Germany in 1970

Dyck, Mr J J

Studied at the University of St Petersburg

Dueck, Henry

Lives in Abbotsford, British Columbia

Logos Canada representative

Active in the organization of the St Petersburg Christian University

Elected to the Board of Directors 1994, secretary of the Board for 4 years

1998-2006 Chairman of the Board

Interim President of the University for some time in 1997 and 2005

Dueck, Mr

From the Crimea

Studied at the St Petersburg Institute of Science of Forestry

Worked in Russia

Ediger, Alexander

Born 1893 in Berdyansk

Parents Heinrich Abram Ediger and Emilie Friesen

Studied History and Philology at the University of St Petersburg 1914-1918

Married Katharina Dyck of the Crimea

Minister, then Elder of the Schoensee Church in the Molotschna

Chairman of the *Kommission fuer Kirchenangelegenheiten* (KfK), and editor of *Unser Blatt*,
the last paper to be published by Mennonites in Russia (1925-1928)

Imprisoned a number of times, finally, in 1938, never to be seen again

Ediger, Elisabeth

Born in Crimea, likely in the 1880s

An older child of Jakob Dyck and Sara Reimer

Married Heinrich Ediger, a homeopathic doctor who had studied in Germany

Children:

Frieda (see separate entry)

Probably Katharina

They accepted Dagmar and Harry into their home when the GPU threatened to exile

Alexander and Katharina Ediger in 1935

Heinrich soon thereafter sent into exile himself

Elisabeth had cancer and went to Leningrad to live with her daughter Frieda

Probably took Dagmar and Harry with her to Leningrad

Ediger, Frieda

Born in the Crimea

Third child of Heinrich Ediger and Elisabeth Dyck

Moved to Leningrad, likely in the late 1930s

Probably married, had **children**

When her father had been exiled, and her mother was sick with cancer, her mother Elisabeth
Ediger moved to Leningrad to be with her

In the German siege of Leningrad, Pavel Kieselev, husband of Dagmar, advised her to leave
the city and escape to the north. She and Katharina (Kaethe), who was possibly her

younger sister, elected not to leave. They eventually they died of "hunger and cold"

Ediger, Harry

Born in the late 1880s or early 1890s in Berdyansk

Second son of Heinrich Abram Ediger and Emilie Friesen

Likely never married

Went to university, quite possibly in St Petersburg, eventually became a lawyer

At first lived in Simferopol until at least 1931

Moved to Leningrad

Went "underground" likely after 1940

Ediger, Harry

Born 7 December 1926 in Schoensee, Molotschna

Parents Alexander Ediger and Katharina Dyck; parents both exiled in 1935

Harry was taken in by relatives, Heinrich and Elisabeth (nee Dyck) Ediger

Heinrich was then also exiled, and Elisabeth, with cancer, moved to be with her daughter

Frieda, in Leningrad

Dagmar and Harry seem to have gone to Leningrad with her, but landed up living on the street

Harry eventually taken to an orphanage in Leningrad, but then was moved out of the city

Eventually Dagmar found Harry, took him back to Leningrad, adopted him into her family

With onset of the German siege of Leningrad Dagmar's husband suggested that she, her baby

Alexander and Harry go up north, which they did, and lived fairly well

Presumably after the siege they returned to Leningrad

Because of his health Harry relocated to a better climate in Kirov, a southwest suburb of

Leningrad

Here he became manager of a grocery store, then of a chain of stores

Took courses in management, this requiring him to go to central Leningrad on occasion, always staying at the home of Dagmar

Dagmar and Harry visited their mother in Canada in August of 1989 to celebrate her ninety-fifth birthday, in 1996 to celebrate the hundredth and came for the funeral in 1998

Ediger, Heinz H

From the Crimea

Studied at the University of St Petersburg, was there in 1910

Was a teacher/professor in Russia

Ediger, Katharina

Born in Crimea 24 July 1896

Parents estate owners Jakob Dyck and Sara Reimer

Attended the Halbstadt *Maedchenschule* 1909-1912, then Tokmak College likely until 1916

After that studied in college in Kharkov, but transferred to Berdyansk in 1918, because it was thought to be safer there

Married Alexander Ediger in 1918

Had children Victoria Dagmar (1922, born in Okretschna, Crimea) and Harry (1926, born in Schoensee, Molotschna)

Alexander was minister, then after 1925 elder of the church in Schoensee

Children had to be left with relatives Heinrich and Elisabeth (nee Dyck) Ediger when exile

was threatened

Was exiled together with Alexander in 1935, and was released after serving her five year sentence in 1940

Despite being officially barred from the city, she eventually found both of her children in Leningrad in 1940

By then Dagmar was married to Pavel Kieselev

Stayed with the children in Leningrad for a brief time

Was in the Leningrad area during the time of the siege, in German occupied territory

Worked mostly in employment offices; she seems to have been in contact with her children during this time

Evacuated into Germany with the retreating German Army in 1943

Reached American Zone by 1948, then migrated to Canada in 1949

Settled in Kitchener, Ontario, where she worked in a hospital for 20 years

Dagmar and Harry were able to come to Canada to see her in 1989, then for her hundredth birthday in 1996 and her funeral in 1998

Katharina died 6 September 1998 at the age of one hundred and two. Her funeral was held in the Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church, where she had been a member

Pastor John Wall, who had helped her to adjust to the new country, gave the funeral oration

Ediger, Katharina (Kaethe)

Probably a sister of Frieda Ediger

On this supposition:

Born in the Crimea

Parents Heinrich Ediger and Elisabeth Dyck

Moved to Leningrad, likely in the late 1930s

In the German siege of Leningrad, Pavel Kieselev, husband of Dagmar, advised her to leave the city and escape to the north. She and Frieda elected not to leave. They eventually died of "hunger and cold"

Ediger, Nikolai P

From Berdyansk

Studied at the Institute of Mining in St Petersburg, to become an engineer/architect

He studied there in 1910

Ediger, Theodor

Born in the late 1880s in Berdyansk

Eldest son of Heinrich Abram Ediger and Emilie Friesen

Went to university, quite possibly in St Petersburg, eventually PhD in history

Married

At first lived in Simferopol until at least 1931

Moved to Leningrad

Theodor's **wife** gave young Harry Ediger a meal once a day for some time, despite the risk this would entail

Theodor was exiled, likely after 1940

Ediger, Victoria Dagmar

Born 1922 in Okretsch, Crimea

Parents Alexander Ediger and Katharina Dyck; parents both exiled in 1935
 Dagmar taken in by relatives Heinrich and Elisabeth (nee Dyck) Ediger
 Heinrich was then also exiled, and Elisabeth, with cancer, moved to be with her daughter
 Frieda, in Leningrad
 Dagmar and Harry seem to have gone to Leningrad with her, but landed up living on the street
 Possibly helped at first by uncles Theodor Ediger and Harry Ediger, who lived there by then
 Dagmar went to school, then lived in a dormitory; had to put brother Harry into an orphanage
 Gave German lessons to Russian and Jewish children
 Married Pavel Kisselev, a Russian army officer, on the promise that they would look after
 brother Harry
 Dagmar studied architecture at the university
 Son Alexander born
 Eventually found brother Harry and adopted him, then called Harry Kisselev
 Mother Katharina found them in Leningrad in 1940
 With the German siege Pavel suggested that Dagmar, son Alexander and Harry should move
 up north, which they did, and with difficulty survived
 Came back, and on army rations could survive
 Harry had bad skin condition, moved to the suburb of Kirov, where he was much improved
 Pavel and family stayed in central Leningrad
 Dagmar and Harry visited their mother in Canada in August of 1989 to celebrate her ninety-
 fifth birthday, in 1996 to celebrate the hundredth birthday, and were present at her
 funeral in 1998

Epp, David

Elected as Minister in the Chortitzer Flemish Church in 1791
 Ordained as elder by Elder Cornelius Warkentin in 1794
 Together with Minister Gerhard Willms (*Kirchenlehrer*) sent to St Petersburg 29 June 1798
 to negotiate a *Privelegium* for the Mennonites with the new Czar Paul I, a provision
 which had been promised by the government in 1787
 After more than two years of frustration (*mehr als zwei Jahre qualvoller Wartens*) they
 received the document they had been hoping to get *Privelegium der Mennoniten in*
Russland signed by Czar Paul I on 6 September 1800
 On 28 October 1800 Epp and Willms returned home to the Chortitza Colony
 They had lived the entire time in the home of Johann (Hans) Hamm.
 They promised him, in the name of the Chortitza Colony, a good pair of horses.
 By 1836 he had not yet received the horses
 Elder Epp died 29 September 1802

Epp, Mr H J

Studied agriculture in St Petersburg, was there in 1914

Fast, Abraham

From Schoensee, Molotschna
 Studied in the Institute of Technology
 Became an engineer/architect
 Worked in St Petersburg

Fast, Hermann Isaak

Graduate of St Chrischona, then taught in the *Musterschule* in Halbstadt likely 1883-1885
After that city missionary for Lutheran pastors in Feodosia for one year
Then for 10 years a tutor for a young count in St Petersburg
In 1910 a teacher in Canada

Froese, Peter Franz

Born 31 January 1892
Zentralschule in Ohrloff, Molotschna, then further higher education
To University at St Petersburg, likely 1911-1914
Joined *Sanitaetsdienst* 1914 before he had completed university
Became official in the *Sanitaetsdienst*, and represented it in a number of conferences
Elected president of *Allrussische Mennonitischer Landwirtschaftlicher Verein*, C F Klassen
vice-president
Head office was in Moscow, where he lived at least 1922-1929
Married, wife: Nadia, children: Nora, Erwin, Kornelia
Editor of *Der Praktische Landwirt* while it was published 15 May 1925 to December 1926
Arrested 1929, served 9½ years in prison, then 2 years in concentration camp
Escaped to Germany in 1943, recovered mental and physical health
Died 23 September 1957 in Germany

Funk, Heinrich Heinrich

Born 29 December 1880 in Neuenberg, Chortitza Colony
One of eleven children of Heinrich Funk and Katharina Friesen
Eventually teacher of Religion and German Language in the New York *Zentralschule*,
in the Ignatyev Colony
Minister, then elder of the Mennonite Church
Attempted to migrate to Canada, instead arrested in 1929 and exiled for seven and a half years
Wife Susanna died. After release he stayed with second daughter in central Asia. She died,
so Heinrich then came to live with eldest daughter Herta in Leningrad
Heinrich was again banished in 1940, together with three of his brothers
Likely died soon after

Funk, Herta

Born in New York, Ignatyev Colony
Oldest child of Heinrich Heinrich Funk and Susanna Rempel
Father Heinrich Heinrich Funk arrested and banished 1929
Married a Mennonite man, who was executed
Lived in Leningrad late 1930s and 1940
Father came to stay with her, until he was again exiled in 1940

Goossen, Peter

From Alexanderthal, Molotschna
Studied at the University of St Petersburg to become a teacher/professor; worked in Russia

Hamm, David

From Chortitza
Studied medicine at the Military Academy of Petersburg

Hamm, Johann (Hans)

Elder David Epp and Minister Gerhard Willms arrived in St Petersburg sometime after 29 June 1798, with the task of negotiating a *Privelegium* for the Mennonites in Russia
They finally received this document on 6 September 1800
On 28 October 1800 Epp and Willms returned home to the Chortitza Colony
They had lived the entire time in the home of Johann (Hans) Hamm. They promised him, in the name of the Chortitza Colony, a good pair of horses. By 1836 he had not yet received the horses

Harder, Mr F

Student in St Petersburg in 1914

Harder, Johann Gerhard

From the Molotschna
Graduate of the Halbstadt *Zentralschule* and Pedagogical Institute
Teacher in a *Dorfschule* for one year
Studied at the St Petersburg Pedagogical Institute
Starting in 1909 taught Russian and Mathematics at the Halbstadt *Zentralschule*

Hoepfner, Jakob

Born 3 January 1748
Lived in Bohnsack near Danzig, West Prussia
Chosen as one of the delegates to visit Russia to assess viability of migration
Together with Johann Bartsch travelled to Russia leaving Danzig 30 October 1786
Presented to Czarina Catherine II on 31 May 1787 in Kremenchug; travelled to the Crimea with the Czarina
Chose land near Kherson for the site of the settlement; headed north to St Petersburg to finalize the arrangements
Carriage they were travelling in tipped 2 August 1787, just before they reached St Petersburg; Hoepfner said to have fractured his leg
While waiting in St Petersburg met Paul, heir to the throne, and his wife Maria Feodorovna
Hoepfner and Bartsch had audience with the Czarina 7 September 1787; she agreed to the terms proposed by the Mennonite delegates
Protocol demanded that all people receiving an audience wear socks; Hoepfner's leg was so swollen that he could not have worn shoes in any case!
Delegates headed for home, likely late September, arriving in Danzig 30 October 1787

Isaak, Johann J**Maria (wife)**

Konstantin - born about 1913

Waldemar - born about 1916

Margaretha - born about 1918

Nathalie - died early

Johann born 27 May 1884 in Tiege, Molotschna

Completed medical studies at the Military Academy at St Petersburg in 1910

December 1911 married Maria Verich

1910-1912 practiced as a physician

1912 started specialized training in ophthalmology in St Petersburg

1914 designated as military physician in Omsk

To Harbin, China by 1923, then to the United States by 1952, died 31 August 1956

(For more details see heading under Omsk)

Isaak, Peter

University of St Petersburg

Became a teacher or professor; eventually taught at the University of British Columbia

Janzen, Bernard

Left the Chortitza Colony in 1796 for St Petersburg

Then returned to be one of the first settlers in Alexandrovsk

Janzen, Mr

Student in Petrograd/Leningrad, presumably after 1917, maybe after 1924

Klassen, Abram

Studied engineering at the University of St Petersburg, likely about 1913 or 1914

Klassen, Cornelius Franz

Studied in the field of Education in St Petersburg 1913-1914 under A Tcheriyayev

Then was a tutor for a year

Subsequently involved in the migration of Mennonites from Russia to Canada in the 1920s,
then with relief work in Europe after World War II

(For more details see heading under Moscow)

Klassen, Jakob

Student in Petrograd/Leningrad, presumably after 1917, maybe after 1924

Klassen, Mr K T

Studied at the University of St Petersburg

Klassen, Nikolai J

From Chortitza

Studied engineering/architecture at the University of St Petersburg and Kharkov

Worked in Alexandrovsk and Vancouver

Wrote article "Mennonite Intelligentsia in Russia" published in *Mennonite Life* April 1969

Klassen, Peter J

From Chortitza

Studied at the St Petersburg Institute of Science of Forestry, was there in 1910

Worked in Russia and Vancouver

Klatt, Wilhelm

From Melitopol (probably from the Verigin Estate, owned by Johann Klatt, near Melitopol)

Studied engineering/architecture at the Institute of Technology

Worked in Russia

Koehn, Mr

Student in Petrograd/Leningrad, presumably after 1917, maybe after 1924

Kroecker, Jakob Johann

Born 31 October 1872 in Gnadental, Molotschna

Moved to Spat, Crimea

Attended Hamburg Baptist Theological Seminary 1893-1897

Ordained minister of the Mennonite Brethren Church in 1898
Joined cousin Abraham Jakob Kroeker in publishing *Friedensstimme*, *Christlicher Familienkalender* and *Christlicher Abreiss-Kalender*
Through revivalist Dr Friedrich Baedeker came into contact with the evangelical movement in St Petersburg; must have spent considerable time there
Organized Bible conferences in south Russia, using his St Petersburg contacts as speakers, such as Preacher Regentrop, Harry Percy Grub and Adam K Podin
Moved to Germany 1910, where he, with Walter Jack, founded a mission, *Licht im Osten*
Published a number of books
Died 12 December 1948 near Stuttgart

Letkemann, Peter Peter

Graduate of the Halbstadt *Zentralschule*, then of the Kharkov *Kommerzschule*
Graduate of the Petersburg Polytechnicum
Teaching business at the Halbstadt *Mittelschule* or *Kommerzschule* in 1910

Martens, Kornelius Kornelius

Born 15 November 1880 in Wernersdorf, Molotschna
Parents Kornelius Johann Martens and Helena Wolff
Soon after his birth the couple moved to Spat, Crimea
Father died 1887; his mother married David Huebert in 1892, and moved to Margenau
Village school in Margenau, *Zentralschule* in Gnadenfeld, *Paedagogische Schule* for 2 years in Halbstadt

Teacher in Siberia, Samara, Alexanderpol

Married **Sara Friesen** 3 July 1904

Children: **Kornelius** - 23 September 1905, in Alexanderpol

Sara - 9 December 1906, in Nikolyevka

Helena (Lena) - 5 November 1908, in Nikolyevka

Tusnelda - 7 June 1907, in Nikolyevka

Alexander - 5 March 1915, in Gnadenfeld, died October 1921 of typhus

Heinrich (Heinz) - 3 January 1919, in Gnadenfeld

Elfriede - 27 October 1923 in Grossweide

Anneliese - 28 May 1925 in Grossweide

In 1906 moved to Nikolyevka of the Ignatyev Mennonite Colony, where Kornelius helped establish a *Zentralschule* and taught Religion, German and Russian

In 1911 Kornelius developed a chronic throat condition, which for a time stopped him from teaching

Moved to St Petersburg in 1912. During the day Kornelius worked as bookkeeper of the St Petersburg branch of Raduga, the Halbstadt based publishing house, which sold mainly Bibles and religious books

Night school at the University he completed courses in social and commercial economics as well as European languages

They lived at 7 Pushkin Street, occupying two rooms, a hall and a tiny kitchen

After two years Kornelius was appointed inspector of schools for the Gnadenfeld Volost, and rector of the Gnadenfeld *Handelsschule*. Elected elder of the Sparrau M B Church

Released from his positions when the Communists took over. Moved to Grossweide, where he started to farm

Secretary-treasurer of *Kommission fuer Kirchenangelegenheiten (KfK)*, and involved with the publication *Unser Blatt*

1931 moved to Stalino (Donetsk), teaching Latin and German

Wife Sara died 28 February 1934; married Anna Klassen in August 1934

Picked up by the police 6 August 1937 because of his continuing religious activities

Sentenced to 10 years' exile. Said to have died of "pneumonia" two years later

Martens, Mr

Student in Petrograd/Leningrad, presumably after 1917, maybe after 1924

Neufeld, Mr A

Student in St Petersburg in 1910

Neufeld, Eugen

From Chortiza and Berdyansk

Studied in the Institute of Technology to become an engineer/architect

Worked in Russia

Penner, Heinrich

From Gnadenfeld, Molotschna

Studied at the University of St Petersburg

Was a teacher

Penner, Hermann Johann

Graduate of the Gnadenfeld *Zentralschule*, of the Halbstadt Pedagogical Institute, and then the St Petersburg Pedagogical Institute

Taught Russian at the Halbstadt *Zentralschule* 1906-1909

Passed certification exams in the autumn of 1908

Back to St Petersburg for further studies in 1909, and still was there in 1910

Penner, Peter F

Born in Kazakhstan, to West Germany at the age of 10

Considerable theological education, including the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California

President of the St Petersburg Christian University 1991-1997

Participated in church planting while living in St Petersburg

1998 earned Th D in Missiology at the University of South Africa

Regehr, Isaak I

Studied at the Polytechnical Institute in 1914

Reimer, Jakob

From Crimea; attended the Karassan *Zentralschule*

Student in St Petersburg, probably engineering; may have spent additional time studying in Moscow and Germany

Was very gifted musically

Siblings Ivan, **Sonya**, **Katya**

Married Mary Brieger; moved to Moscow, possibly because Mary was transferred there

Son Harold was born 5 October 1923 in Moscow

Transferred, likely as an engineer, to Tashkent for a time
Divorce, likely about 1925, possibly when he was transferred
Married a Russian woman in Tashkent
Daughter Erika was born in 1926
Jakob was executed in Moscow in 1937 as part of the "Great Purge"

Rempel, Gerhard G

From New York, Ignatyev Colony
Studied at the Institute of Electrical Engineering in 1910
Worked in Russia, presumably as an electrical engineer

Rempel, Mr W

Student in St Petersburg in 1914

Sawatzky, G G

Student in St Petersburg in 1910

Sawatzky, P P

Student in St Petersburg in 1910

Schierling, Mr

Student in St Petersburg in 1910

Schmidt, Mr

Student at St Petersburg Institute of Science of Forestry
Worked in Saratov, Russia

Schroeder, Margarethe Peter

Born 2 May 1887 on an estate in Taschtschenak
Parents estate owners Peter Heinrich Schroeder and Maria Klassen
Inherited part of the estate of Peter Heinrich Schroeder in the Crimea
Lived and travelled with brother Peter, acting as his housekeeper, even when he was in
St Petersburg as a Duma representative
Often accompanied Peter to official state functions
Obtained music degree at the St Petersburg Academy of Music
Married David Goossen 27 February 1921
Peter continued to live with the Goossens until he died in Chortitza in 1942
Goossens escaped to Germany, then out of Berlin with the miraculous "Berlin Escape" of 1947
To Paraguay; Margarethe died in 1963 in a care home in Asuncion

Schroeder, Peter Peter

Member of the Russian Duma
Born 3 December 1886 in Melitopol, Taurida
Parents estate owners Peter Heinrich Schroeder and Maria Klassen
Spent youth on the estate at Taschtschenak; attended *Realschule* and *Kommerzschule*
in Melitopol
Further education in Kharkov, likely university in the field of economics
Established residence on the Crimean holdings of his father, supervised, then owned a part
Was on the board of a *Zentralschule*, likely the one in Karassan
Elected to the Fourth National Duma in 1912; represented the opposition "Progressive Party"
Travelled a lot, spent considerable time in St Petersburg, even renting an apartment there

His sister Margarethe stayed with him to manage the household, and often accompanied him to state functions

There is no record of Peter having made speeches to the assembly, but he did work on various commissions

Term ended in 1917; no new elections held then because of the Revolution

Probably disposed of his property and moved to Simferopol in 1918

Moved to Zaporozhye, then to Chortitza

Sister Margarethe married, Peter stayed with the couple

Died, unmarried, 6 June 1942 in Chortitza

Sudermann, A J

Student preparing for teaching, so presumably some pedagogical courses

Sudermann, Leonhard

Elder of the Berdyansk Mennonite Church

Chosen as one of a number of delegates to represent the Mennonite position of total nonresistance to the government in St Petersburg

He was the spokesman for the Molotschna group when they handed their petition to Count Heyden, President of the Imperial Council, on 2 March 1871

After the presentation, the delegation was advised that there was nothing further that they could do, so they went home to their churches

It was commented on by the Count that the leaders of the delegation spoke no Russian

Thiessen, Victor

Son of architect Dietrich Kornelius Thiessen of Ekaterinoslav

Dietrich imprisoned and executed in September 1937

Son Victor, art student in Leningrad, was imprisoned and executed in 1941

Toews, Mr

Son of Abram Toews, a teacher who was exiled to the far north in the Soviet Union, where he froze to death

Mr Toews, at the age of 30 stepped on a bomb in Leningrad, and died

Mother Toews migrated to Canada, broke her hip, and eventually died in Winnipeg, Manitoba

Unger, Mr

Student in Petrograd/Leningrad, presumably after 1917, maybe after 1924

Wall, Mr H

Studied pedagogical courses to prepare him for teaching the deaf and mute, was there in 1914

Wallmann, Hermann

From Chortitza

Studied law at the University of St Petersburg

Practiced law in Russia

Warkentin, Mr J

Student in St Petersburg in 1914

Wiebe, A J

Student in St Petersburg in 1910

Wiebe, Heinrich

From Steinfeld, Molotschna

Studied at the University of St Petersburg

Was a teacher in Schoenwiese

Wieler, Gerhard

Born about 1834

Baptized in Liebenau and joined the MB Church in September 1861

Exiled teacher from the Molotschna

In St Petersburg as the deputy of the Chortitza Mennonite Brethren Church

Attempted to obtain an official recognition for his congregations, the same as Johann Claassen had obtained for the Molotschna Mennonite Brethren Church

Together they went through the document, and presented it to authorities at the Summer Palace
11 June 1862

12 June both Johann Claassen and Gerhard Wieler headed for their homes

He was one of the four Chortitza Mennonite Brethren leaders who were arrested 12 July 1862 and jailed for 2 weeks in Ekaterinoslav

Later migrated to North America

Willms, Gerhard

Minister (*Kirchenlehrer*) in the Chortitzer Flemish Church

Together with Elder David Epp of the Chortitzer Flemish Church sent to St Petersburg

29 June 1798 to negotiate a *Privelegium* for the Mennonites with the new Czar Paul I, a provision which had been promised by the government in 1787

After more than two years of frustration (*mehr als zwei Jahre qualvoller Wartens*) they received the document they had been hoping to get, *Privelegium der Mennoniten in Russland*, signed by Czar Paul I on 6 September 1800

On 28 October 1800 Epp and Willms returned home to the Chortitza Colony

They had lived the entire time in the home of Johann (Hans) Hamm. They promised him, in the name of the Chortitza Colony, a good pair of horses. By 1836 he had not yet received the horses



Kornelius Martens



Sarah Martens (nee Friesen)



Son, Mrs Toews and minister Abram Toews. The son stepped on a bomb in Leningrad and died



Jakob Kroecker



Harry Ediger at about age 15



Dagmar Kieselev, Tina Neufeld and Harry Kieselev at Niagara Falls in 1989

STUDENTS IN ST PETERSBURG

In the lists and pictures all of the students are male; we have found only two Mennonite females who attended the University of St Petersburg or equivalent, Victoria Dagmar Kieselev (nee Ediger) in architecture, and Margarethe Schroeder in music.

Bergmann, Kornelius Peter - Molotschna, St Petersburg Pedagogical Institute, graduated in 1899
Block, H - student in St Petersburg in 1910
Block, T - student in St Petersburg in 1910
Braeul, Alexander - Ohrloff, University of St Petersburg, teacher/professor
Braun, Peter J - Alexanderwohl, Teachers Institute, teacher/professor
Derksen, G S - student in St Petersburg in 1910
Dyck, Arnold - Hochfeld, Chortitza, Academy of Art, artist/writer
Dyck, J J - University of St Petersburg
Dueck - Crimea, St Petersburg Institute of Science of Forestry
Ediger, Alexander - Berdyansk, University of St Petersburg, teacher/professor
History and Philology, 1914-1918
Ediger, Heinz H - Crimea, University of St Petersburg, teacher/professor, was there in 1910
Ediger, Nikolai P - Berdyansk, Institute of Mining, engineer/architect, was there in 1910
Epp, Dietrich Heinrich - Chortitza, St Petersburg Teachers' College, likely 1901-1905
Epp, H J - agriculture, was there in 1914
Fast, Abraham - Schoensee, Institute of Technology, engineer/architect
Froese, Peter Franz - University of St Petersburg, engineering, likely about 1911-1914
Goossen, Peter - Alexanderthal, University of St Petersburg, teacher/professor
Hamm, David - Chortitza, Military Academy of Petersburg (medical studies)
Harder, F - student in St Petersburg in 1914
Harder, Johann G - Molotschna, University of St Petersburg, teacher/professor
Isaak, Johann - Military Academy of St Petersburg (medical studies)
Graduated from medicine in 1910; 1912-1914 returned for specialization training in
Ophthalmology. After that he went to Omsk, and then Harbin, then the United States
Isaak, Peter - University of St Petersburg, teacher/professor
Janzen, Mr - student in Petrograd/Leningrad, presumably after 1917, possibly after 1924
Kieselev (nee Ediger), Victoria Dagmar - Architecture, University of St Petersburg, 1940s
Klassen, Abram - University of St Petersburg, engineering, likely about 1913 or 1914
Klassen, Cornelius Franz - studied in the field of Education 1913-1914 with A Tcheriyayev
Klassen, Jakob - Petrograd/Leningrad, presumably after 1917, possibly after 1924
Klassen, K T - University of St Petersburg
Klassen, Nikolai J - Chortitza, University of St Petersburg, engineer/architect
Klassen, Peter J - Chortitza, St Petersburg Institute of Science of Forestry, was there in 1910
Klatt, Wilhelm - likely Verigi Estate near Melitopol, Institute of Technology, engineer/architect
Koehn, Mr - Petrograd/Leningrad, presumably after 1917, possibly after 1924
Letkemann, Peter Peter - Molotschna, St Petersburg Polytechnicum, teaching business in
Halbstadt

Martens, Kornelius Kornelius - University of St Petersburg, economics, languages, 1912-1914
 Martens, Mr - Petrograd/Leningrad, presumably after 1917, possibly after 1924
 Neufeld, A - student in St Petersburg in 1910
 Neufeld, Eugen - Chortitza, Berdyansk, Institute of Technology, engineer/architect
 Penner, Heinrich - Gnadenfeld, University of St Petersburg, teacher/professor
 Penner, Hermann J - University of St Petersburg, teacher/professor, was there in 1910
 Regehr, Isaak I - Polytechnical Institute, was there in 1914
 Reimer, Jakob - Crimea, likely studied engineering, possibly also studied in Germany
 Rempel, Gerhard G - New York, Ignatyev, Institute of Electrical Engineering, engineer/architect
 was there in 1910
 Rempel, W - student in St Petersburg in 1914
 Sawatzky, G G - student in St Petersburg in 1910
 Sawatzky, Kornelius - graduate of the Pedagogical Institute
 Sawatzky, P P - student in St Petersburg in 1910
 Schierling, Mr - student in St Petersburg in 1910
 Schmidt Mr - St Petersburg Institute of Science of Forestry
 Schroeder, Margarethe - St Petersburg Academy of Music, sometime 1912-1917
 Sudermann, A J - teaching
 Thiessen, Victor - art student, executed in Leningrad 1941
 Unger, Mr - Petrograd/Leningrad, presumably after 1917, possibly after 1924
 Wall, H - course for teaching the deaf and mute, was there in 1914
 Wallmann, Hermann - Chortitza, University of St Petersburg, law
 Warkentin, J - student in St Petersburg in 1914
 Wiebe, A J - student in St Petersburg in 1910
 Wiebe, Heinrich - Steinfeld, University of St Petersburg, teacher/professor

Mennonite Students in St Petersburg in 1895 (from a photograph)

Visiting minister, presumably "shepherding" the flock
 14 students, all male, no names given

Mennonite Students in St Petersburg in 1910 (from a photograph)

H Block, T Block, G S Derksen, H H Ediger, N P Ediger, P J Klassen, A Neufeld, H J Penner,
 G G Rempel, G G Sawatzky, P P Sawatzky, Schierling, A J Wiebe

Mennonite Students in St. Petersburg in 1914 (from a photograph)

H Epp, F Harder, I Regehr, W Rempel, H Wall, J Warkentin

Mennonite Students in Leningrad, presumably after 1917 (from a photograph)

Janzen, Jacob Klassen, Koehn, Martens, Unger

Students



Mennonite students in St Petersburg in 1895 with a visiting minister



Students in St Petersburg in 1910, l to r:
 Back row: G S Derksen, H H Ediger, G G Rempel, Schierling, P J Klassen
 G G Sawatzky
 Middle row: A J Wiebe, P P Sawatzky, H J Penner, T Block,
 Front row: N P Ediger, H Block, A Neufeld

Students



Students in St Petersburg, likely before 1914, l to r:
H J Epp-agriculture, A J Sudermann-education
K T Klassen-university, I I Regehr- polytechnical
J J Dyck-university, H Wall-education for the deaf



Students in St Petersburg in 1914
Back row l to r: Isaak I Regehr,
H Wall, F Harder
Front row: W Rempel, H J Epp,
J Warkentin



Peter Klassen and wife Maria
(nee Thiessen). He studied
forestry

Students



Students in Leningrad, possibly after 1924, 1 to r: Jakob Klassen, Koehn, Martens, Unger, Janzen

University of St Petersburg



St Petersburg State University established in 1724 by decree of Peter the Great. Eighteenth century buildings on the Neva embankment of Vasilievsky Island

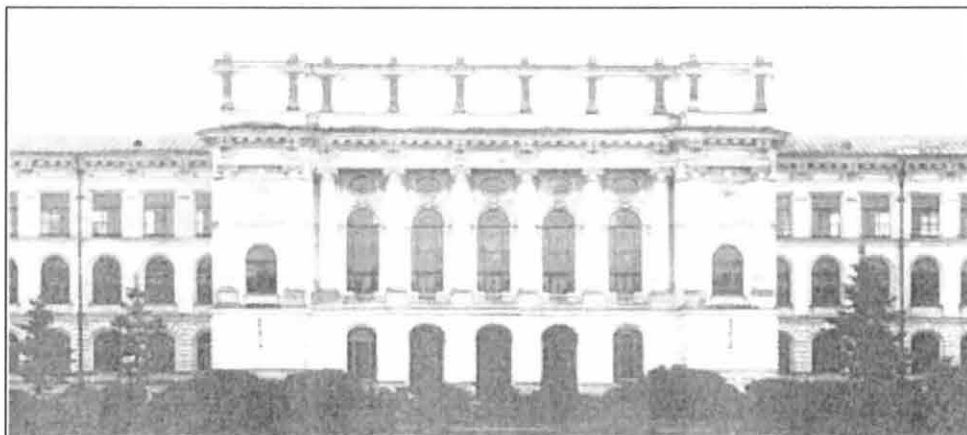
Universities and Colleges in St Petersburg



St Petersburg State University



Zhdanov State University, showing the Twelve Collegiums building



St Petersburg State Polytechnical University. Founded in 1899



Czarina Catherine the Great
Jakob Hoeppner and Johann Bartsch
had an audience with the Czarina
on 7 September 1787



Grand Palace and Cascade at Tzarskoje Selo, where
Mennonites delivered a number of petitions



Johann Claassen, M B
deputy in St Petersburg
1860-1862



Czar Paul I. David Epp and
Gerhard Willms received the
Privelegium signed by Paul on
6 September 1800



Elder Leonhard Sudermann,
spokesman for Molotschna
delegation in 1871



Grand Palace Fountains



Peter Peter Schroeder
Elected to Fourth
Duma in 1912

Mennonites in the Duma at St Petersburg



Hermann and Helena Bergmann
He was elected to the Third and
Fourth Dumas in 1907 and 1912



A group of Duma members, described "judging by their
dress must be mainly of peasant origin"



Taurida Palace, where the Duma Assembly met

THE 900-DAY SIEGE OF LENINGRAD

8 September 1941 to 27 January 1944

At 4 AM on 22 June 1941 the German Army smashed across the border into Soviet Russia. One hundred and forty divisions, of these 17 Panzer and 13 Mechanized, 3,300 tanks and 2,770 aircraft threw themselves into action. Operation Barbarossa, the plan to conquer European Russia, was off to a good start. There were three main initial thrusts. The Army Group North under General Wilhelm von Leeb headed through the Baltic States toward Leningrad. Army Group Centre, led by General von Bock, was on the road to Moscow, while Army Group South commanded by von Runstedt was slated to overrun Ukraine, then the Don Basin and the Caucasian oil fields.

The principal objective of the Army Group North was the capture of Leningrad; the German plan was code named Operation *Nordlicht* (Northern Light). In total the German troop strength attacking the city was 725,000 men. The last rail connection to the city was severed on 30 August when the Germans reached the Neva River. Shelling of Leningrad began on 4 September. The last land connection to the besieged city was broken when the German Army reached Lake Ladoga at Orekhovets. Bombing of Leningrad on 8 September caused 178 fires.

All this was complicated by the fact that the Finns also reconquered the Karelian Peninsula and eventually threatened Leningrad from the west and north, although they halted their advance at the 1939 border.

The Soviets put into effect extensive plans to defend Leningrad. They had 190 kilometres of timber blockades, 635 kilometres of wire entanglements, 700 kilometres of anti-tank ditches as well as 25,000 kilometres of



The battle around Leningrad



Women collecting water from a watermain break

open trenches built by civilians. Many of the inhabitants and nearly three quarters of the industrial plants were evacuated eastward ahead of the German advance. It is likely that Dagmar Kieselev, son Alexander and brother Harry, at the insistence of Dagmar's husband Pavel, left Leningrad at this time. The remaining civilian population, which included the Ediger relatives Frieda Ediger, her children and likely Frieda's mother, as well as another woman, Kaethe Ediger and family, chose to stay. The defending Soviet Army of 930,000 men, which included Pavel Kieselev, was commanded by Generals Kliment

Voroshilov and Georgiy Zhukov.

Leningrad put up a desperate defense, despite repeated assaults, constant artillery and air bombardment. There were almost immediate shortages of foodstuffs. On 12 September 1941 it was calculated that provisions for army and civilians would last: grain and flour 35 days, groats and macaroni 30 days, and meat (including livestock) 33 days. Rationing was implemented that same day, with workers being entitled to 500 grams of bread, other employees and children 300 grams, and dependents 250 grams. Starvation-level food rationing was eased somewhat by new vegetable gardens which covered most of the open ground in the city by 1943. Suffering in the city was



Streets of the besieged city were littered with the dead

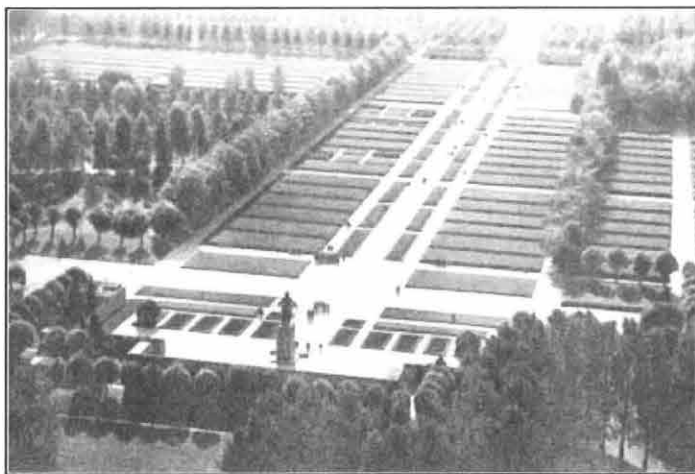
aggravated by the cold winter weather, in particular the extremely harsh winter of 1941-1942, when the temperature sometimes dipped to -40°C . The only route for supplies for much of the time of the siege was the "road of life" across the ice of Lake Ladoga; this was later augmented by an oil pipeline and electric cables which were laid on the lake bed.

Estimates of deaths vary considerably, between 660,000 and 1,000,000 civilians died, a very high proportion from scurvy and starvation. As well, 16,470 died as a result of shelling and bombing. Military casualties were about 300,000. Frieda Ediger, her mother and children

were among those who died, as well as Kaethe Ediger and family.

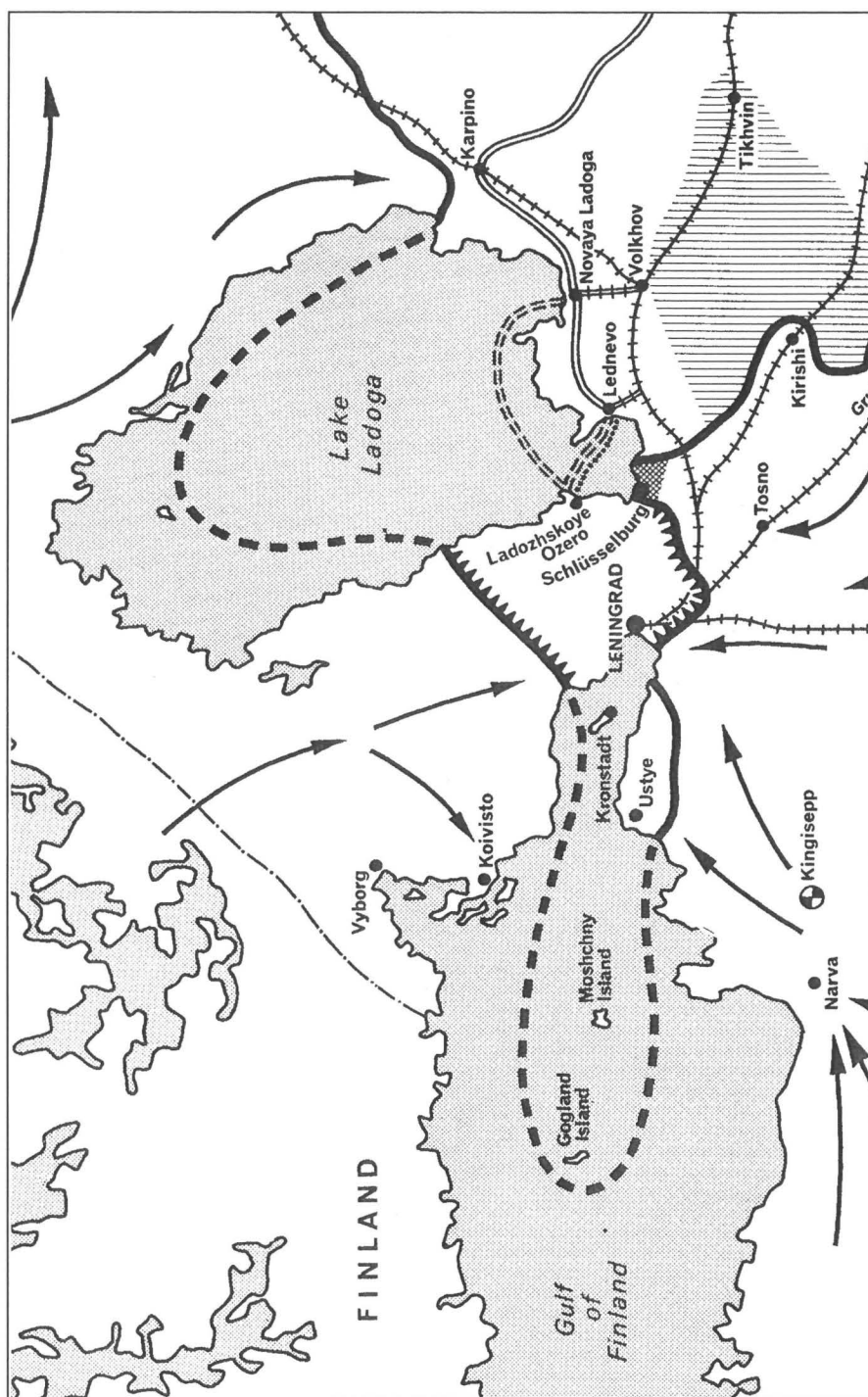
The blockade proper was broken in January of 1943, although the last German troops did not leave the region until 27 January 1944. The actual length of the siege was in fact 872 days. Pavel Kiesslev, being a soldier in the Soviet Army, remained in the city, surviving both the famine and the fierce fighting. Dagmar Kiesslev, her son Alexander and brother Hardy came back to Leningrad, presumably shortly after the siege was lifted, and have lived in Leningrad ever since.

Leningrad suffered tremendous damage from the constant bombardment, and before retreating, the Germans destroyed the palaces at Petrodvorets and Pushkin. Not until the 1960s did the city regain its prewar population of 3,000,000 people. For the



The Piskaryovskoye Memorial Cemetery, where over 500,000 people are buried, many in mass graves

role Leningrad played in the war it was honored with the title of "Hero City," a special defense medal and the "Order of Lenin." Many of the victims of the siege are buried in the Piskaryovskoye Memorial Cemetery.



The 900-Day Siege of Leningrad, 8 September 1941 to 27 January 1944

ST PETERSBURG CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

In 1990 a Bible School began as an extension of Theological Education by Extension in Beloreshensk. Some trouble with the local police

Relocated to St Petersburg in 1992

About 10 agencies involved, among them:

Baptist Union of Moscow

Logos Germany - Johannes Reimer

Logos Canada - Henry Dueck of Abbotsford, British Columbia

Rented 4 floors of a technical school; about 125 residential students

President Peter Penner, an *Umsiedler* from Germany

Initially granted a 3-year Bachelor of Theology degree, and 1½ year Christian Education degree

First graduation in 1993. At the May 1994 graduation a board was elected, 50% Russian, 50% from other countries

Chairman - Peter Konovalchik

Secretary - Henry Dueck

German representative - Heinrich Klassen

Gospel Missionary Union representative - Harold Peters

Henry Dueck chairman of the board 1998-2006. Had 2 sessions of being interim president in 1997, 2005

1998 new property was purchased, near the metro, 10 minutes from the Hermitage

Building with teaching facilities dedicated in 2000

Residence dedicated 2003

203 volunteers from North America helped with the renovations

Current degrees offered:

Bachelor of Theology - 4 years

Master of Theology - 2 additional years

Degree is validated by the University of Wales

Bachelor of Pastoral Ministries - 3 years

Currently (2007) 170 full-time and part-time students

5 satellite campuses, with about 75 students

One campus is in Orenburg

President of the University is Alexander Negov

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Chapter IX

TOKMAK BOLSHOI TOKMAK GROSS TOKMAK

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TOKMAK
(BOLSHOI TOKMAK)
(GROSS TOKMAK)

Tokmak is a city just east of the upper reaches of the Molochnaya River, actually on one of its tributaries, the Tokmak River. It is currently a regional centre of the Zaporozhye Oblast.

The city was first settled in 1784 by state peasants from the Pultava Gubernia. In 1797 the regional administration for the Mariupol district was located in Tokmak, although it was moved to Orechov in 1801. In 1798 a "road" was built connecting Tokmak to Alexandrovsk. In 1804 and thereafter the Molotschna Mennonite Colony developed on either side, and south of Tokmak. The first school was built in 1836, although education was not fostered. In 1838 the town boasted 703 yards, with 4,905 citizens. In 1844 Tokmak had two water-powered mills, 15 wind mills and three oil presses. The village prospered, and by 1861 had 8,000 inhabitants; that same year it was renamed Velykyi Tokmak. Raising of sheep was important, grain being produced only for local use.

In 1866 the inhabitants, the majority being serfs, could obtain their own land. Unfortunately many were unable to pay the taxes, so they sold the land to the more wealthy. Between 1882 and 1886 the Fuchs machinery shop was established; it produced agricultural machinery. In that same period a large brick and tile factory was built. In March of 1912 the Tokmak River over flowed its banks. Two hundred houses were flooded, and many collapsed, and a wooden bridge was swept away. In 1913 the Tokmak Railway line was completed, financed by a consortium, some of whom came from Tokmak, others from the Molotschna and Berdyansk. It stimulated industrial development in both the town and the surrounding Molotschna Colony.

In the years before World War I, Tokmak was often a "shopping centre" for people of the surrounding Molotschna Colony. Heinrich Bernard Tiessen, of neighbouring, Ladekopp described the city in some detail. In 1914 the population of Tokmak was 32,000. There were five large Orthodox churches and one synagogue. The business section was laid out in one big square, which had nearly 100 stores. There were several banks and other financial institutions. There was a *Gymnasium* near the centre, with a number of elementary schools in various parts of the city. Fuchs and Kleiner owned large factories which produced agricultural machinery. The Tiessen land was close at hand, so the companies often tested their equipment by ploughing their land. The Zagoreline factory of Tokmak produced gasoline engines. A considerable number of Mennonites from the surrounding region worked in these industries. Mr J Wall owned a large steam-powered flour mill. There was also a large community hospital where, for example, a number of Mennonites worked as orderlies during World War I.

The Tiessen family often visited the shops in Tokmak. They supplied the merchant Berger with fresh butter. He sold textiles and other items in his two-story L-shaped store. Bondarenko owned a large grocery store, and never forgot to give the children treats. Mr Pekker had a 4-story building, which contained his shop which sold textiles, footwear and hardware supplies. He always sat on a chair in front of his store and welcomed the customers. Mennonites from even farther afield made a day of shopping in Tokmak.

Katharina Willms remembered events around 1912 or 1913. At the time there was no store in Hierschau, so her father, Johann Willms, went shopping to Tokmak. Mother Gertrude Willms would make up the shopping list, then Johann would go off with *droschka* and two beautiful horses.

The children would like to go on this all-day excursion, and young Katie considered it to be a privilege if she went. The seats of the *droschka* were nice and soft, and there promised to be some treat along the way. It should be said, however, that even those who stayed at home would get a treat. Mother's favourite was marzipan candy.

Tokmak was also a regional centre of governmental activities. When lots were drawn to see which Mennonite men were to serve in the *Forstei* in 1881, the procedure was carried out in Tokmak. With the Revolution and subsequent Civil War, citizens of Tokmak also suffered. During the "Halbstadt Days of Terror," of 16, 17 and 18 February 1918, a group of the Black Sea sailors who had attacked Halbstadt also moved into Tokmak. They brutally murdered two Jewish merchants, J Berger and Jakob Pekker. When the surrounding farmers gathered in protest the sailors had to send for reinforcements.

B B Jannz received a summons to appear at the district government offices in Tokmak in his negotiations in 1921 with officials regarding the status of Mennonites. The Kharkov government Chairman of the Committee for national Minorities, Makar, seemed to operate out of this office. Also in 1921 the factories Fuchs and Kleiner were amalgamated, in 1923 being called "Krasnyj Progress." Later in the 1920s other manufacturing firms from the Molotschna and even from Einlage were combined to form the largest company in Ukraine. A model tractor "Zaporoschez," assembled in Einlage, used a motor produced in Tokmak.

Tokmak suffered the usual brutality of the Revolution and the following Civil War, suffered the common deprivation of the famine of 1920-1923. Many of the more successful farmers were exiled in the dekulakization process of the early 1930s, and their farms were amalgamated into collectives.

In 1938 the town was declared a city, and in 1962 the original name was restored. In 1971 the Bolshoi Tokmak Manganese Basin was estimated to have one major deposit of 1,109.5 million metric tons, representing 43.6% of Soviet reserves. In 1989 the population was 45,800. The city is an industrial centre which produces sheet metal, diesel engines, agricultural machinery, canned and baked goods, granite and furniture.

BUSINESSES FREQUENTED BY MENNONITES IN TOKMAK

Joseph Fuchs - agricultural machinery

J W Kleiner - agricultural machinery

J A Pekker and Sons - cloth, wool, furs, linoleum

B Gontscharow - watches, clocks, musical instruments, gramophones

S A Goldstein - furs, linoleum

Electro-Technical Company - lights and lamps, electrical irons, electric bells, telephones

Gustav Hamm - books, pictures, calendars

All advertised in the *Christlicher Familienkalender* 1901-1914

Churches in Tokmak



St Michael Church in Tokmak



Woznesenska Church in Tokmak



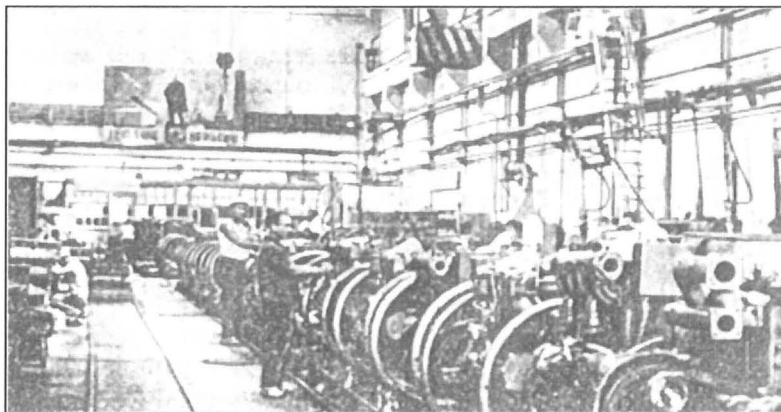
Tokmak market 1922-1923



J A Pekker & Sons building in Tokmak



Destruction in Tokmak in 1943 during World War II



Factory in Tokmak in 1968

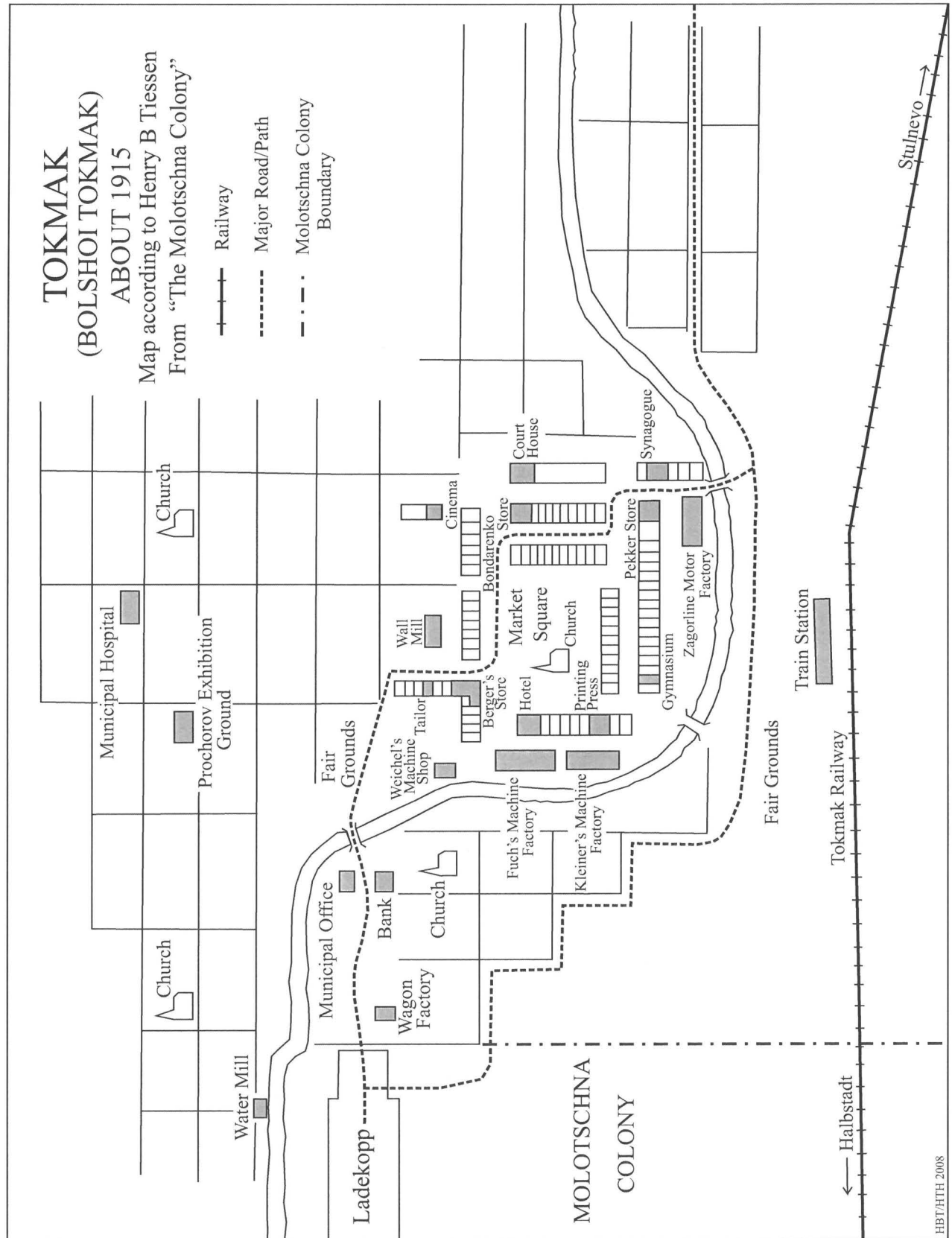
TOKMAK

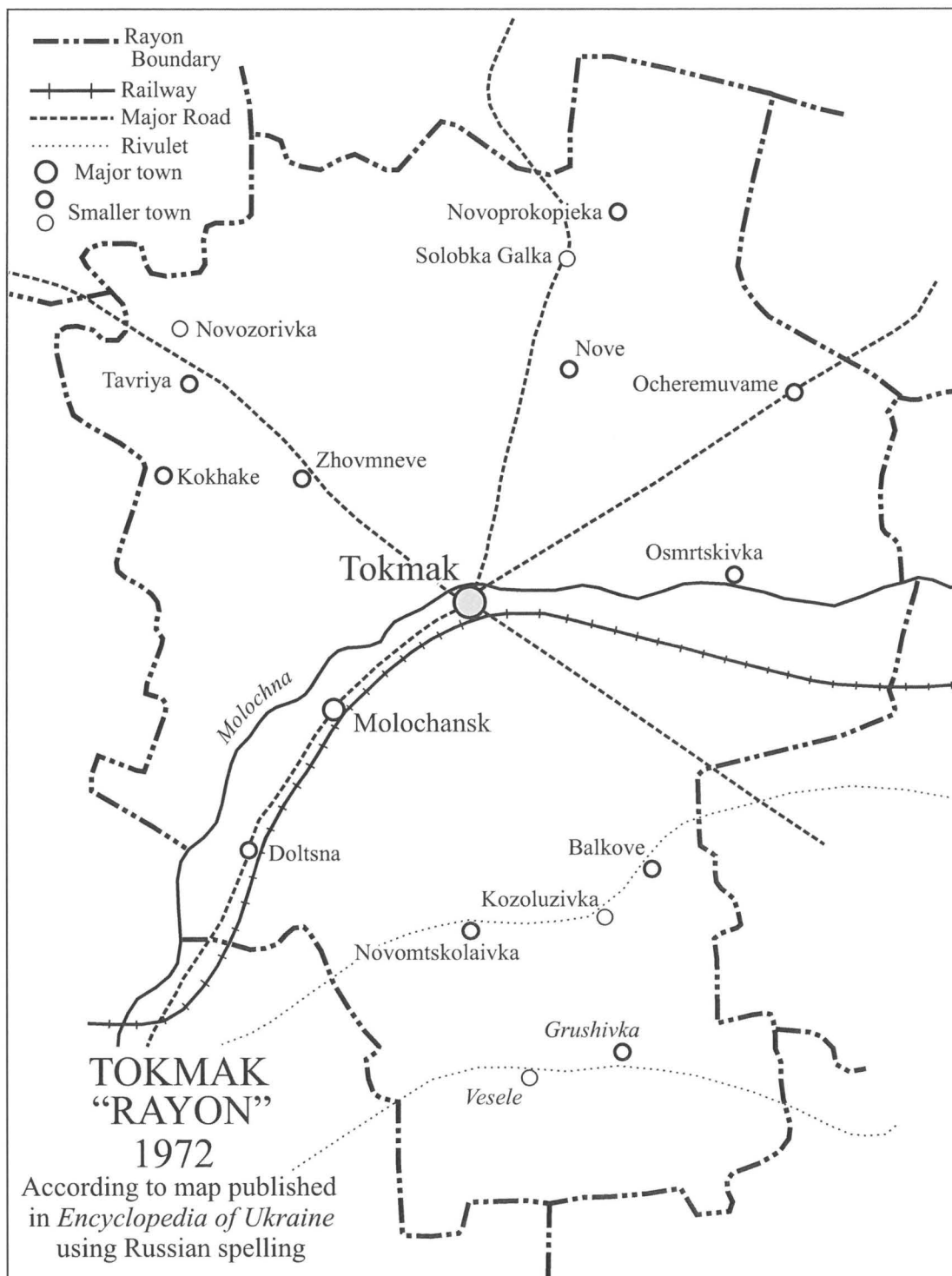
(BOLSHOI TOKMAK)

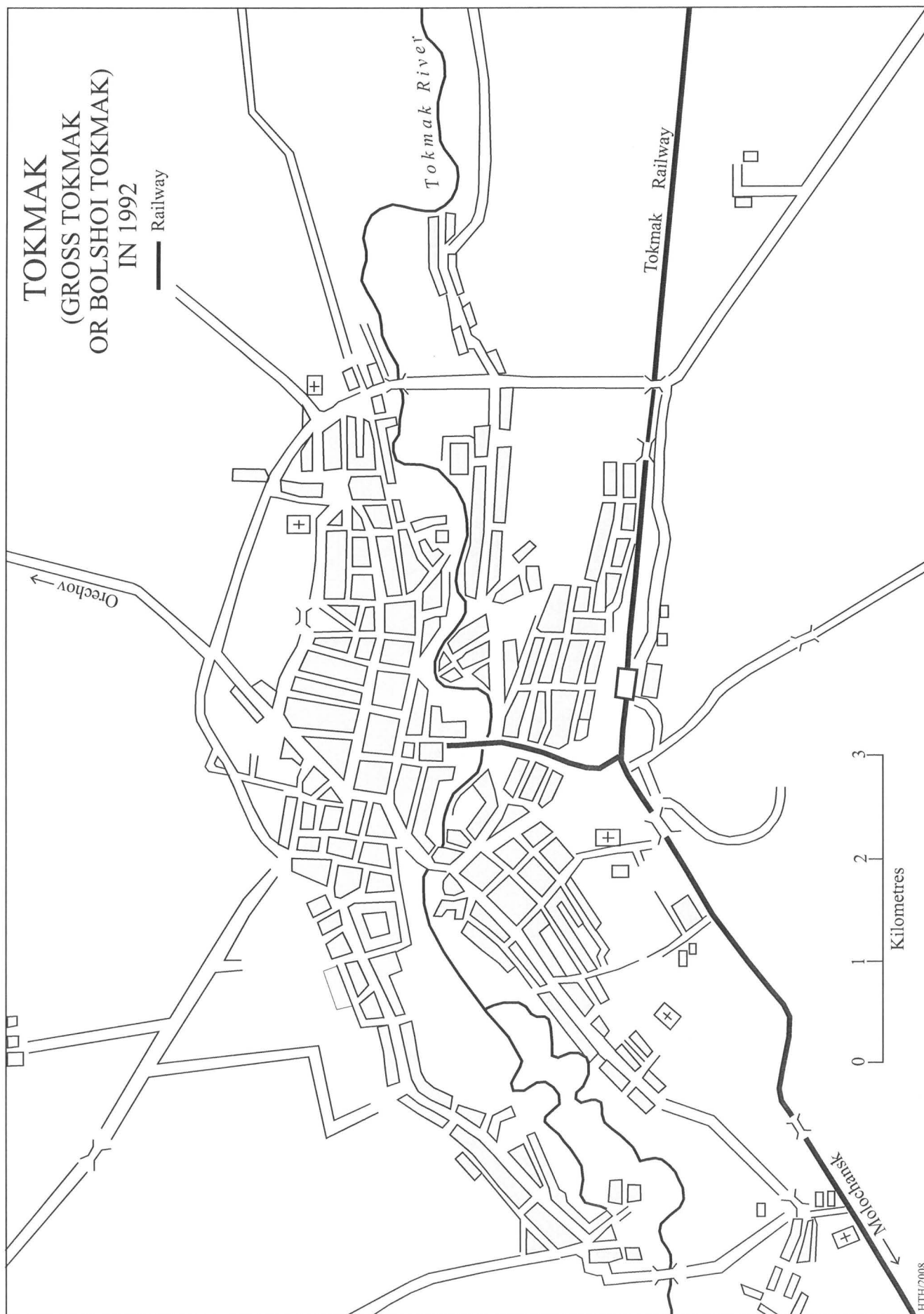
ABOUT 1915

Map according to Henry B Tiessen
From "The Molotschna Colony"

- +—+— Railway
- Major Road/Path
- . - . - Molotschna Colony Boundary







LIST OF PEOPLE

(People who at one time were born, lived, worked or died in Tokmak)
(Each name will appear in **bold** print only once)

While Tokmak was very close to the Molotschna, and many Mennonites shopped and did business in there, very few actually established businesses or lived there. We were able to identify 90 Mennonites who spent a significant time in Tokmak. Being born there or dying there are among the criteria which would qualify them for being on this list.

Albrecht, Abram

Born 20 August 1881 in Berdyansk

Married **Malwine Siemens** 10 April 1903 in Petershagen, Molotschna

Children:

1. **Malwine**

2. **Anna** - born 4 February 1905, died 7 July 1982 in Odessa

3. **Martha** - born 13 July 1908 in Tokmak, Taurida, lived in Berdyansk in 1942, died
6 June 1982 in Odessa

Becker, Dietrich

Born 10 May 1914

Parents Johann Becker and Margaretha Janzen

Married Liese Berg 21 December 1939; she was born 19 October 1918

3 children

At least one of his siblings migrated to Germany

He died 28 January 1963 in Tokmak

Berg, Mr

Technician in the Zagorline Motor Factory

Friend of Heinrich Bernard Tiessen of Ladekopp

Berg, Wilhelm

Born about 1841 in Tiegerweide, Molotschna

Married **Katharina Hiebert** 4 November 1864

Children:

First child **Abraham** was born 24 November 1865 in Tokmak

The next 6 children were likely born in Tiegerweide, the last one in Gnadental,
Molotschna

The family migrated to the USA, likely after 1884

Abraham died in Fletcher, Missouri, 21 August 1948

Braun, Heinrich

The Braun print shop and bookstore was principally based in Neu-Halbstadt, valued at 38,000R

There was also a branch of this company in Tokmak in 1908, valued at 6,000R

Presumably Heinrich Braun and some of his employees spent some time working in Tokmak

Claassen, Johann

1820-1876

Lived in Liebenau

One of the founders of the Mennonite Brethren Church

Together with Jakob Reimer and others, involved in an attempt to establish an *Armenschule* in Tokmak. It failed in 1861 due to lack of qualified teachers, lack of funding, and lack of interest

Dick, Jakob and Isaak

Owners of a steam-powered flour mill, valued at 10,000R according to the *Forstei* Taxation List of 1908

They are listed as living in Tokmak, but the location of the mill is not given

Not sure if the mill was located in Tokmak

Dyck, Jacob Johann

Born 2 February 1879 in Nikolaifeld, Yazykovo Colony

Married **Anna Thiessen** 11 May 1902

She was born 13 September 1879, parents Heinrich Thiessen and Helena Wiebe

The family moved quite often; Nikolaifeld, Don Region, Tokmak, Zentral, Issyl Kul and back to Nikolaifeld

Children:

1. **Anna** - born 17 June 1903 in Nikolaifeld, died 24 May 1958
2. **Heinrich** - born 9 March 1905 in Saizevo, Don Region, married Eugenie Schroeder, migrated to Canada, 6 children, he died 19 December 1976 in Richmond, BC
3. **Helena** - born 29 July 1906 in Tokmak, Taurida, died 3 March 1911
4. **Louise** - born 6 March 1908 in Tokmak, Taurida, died 13 December 1993 in Clearbrook, BC
5. Susanna - born 19 January 1910 in Zentral, Voronezh
6. Wilhelm - born 13 September 1912 in Issyl Kul, Siberia, married Roswitha Leng, 3 children
7. Edmund - born 3 January 1917 in Nikolaifeld, Yazykovo, migrated to Canada, married Helen Lalonde, 2 children

Father Jacob died 8 February 1920 in Nikolaipol, wife Anna died 24 May 1958 in Vancouver, BC

Ediger, Katharina

Born in Crimea 24 July 1896

Parents estate owners Jakob Dyck and Sara Reimer

Attended the Halbstadt *Maedchenschule* 1909-1912, then Tokmak College likely until 1916

After that studied at a college in Kharkov, but transferred to Berdyansk in 1918, because it was thought to be safer there

Married Alexander Ediger in 1918

Had children Victoria Dagmar (1922, born in Okretsch, Crimea) and Harry (1926, born in Schoensee, Molotschna)

Was exiled together with Alexander in 1935, and was released in 1940 after serving her five-year sentence

By then Dagmar was married to Pavel Kisselev

Was in the Leningrad area during the time of the siege, in German occupied territory

Worked mostly in employment offices; she seems to have been in contact with her children during this time

Evacuated into Germany with the retreating German Army in 1943

Reached American Zone by 1948, then migrated to Canada in 1949

Settled in Kitchener, Ontario, where she worked in a hospital for 20 years

Katharina died 6 September 1998 at the age of one hundred and two. Her funeral was held in the Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church, where she had been a member

Pastor John Wall, who had helped her to adjust to the new country, gave the funeral oration

Eifert, Alex

Married **Eva Huebert**, who was born 24 December 1921 in Kudashev, Ekaterinoslav

Her parents were Johann Huebert and Olga Thielmann

Child **Olga** born 14 April 1961 in Tokmak, Taurida

Epp, Heinrich Heinrich

Born 26 August 1833 in Rosenort, Molotschna

Parents Heinrich Heinrich Epp and Sara Thiessen

The family of the parents lived in Rosenort

Son Heinrich and his family lived in Kleefeld, Molotschna

Heinrich died in Tokmak, likely on his way home to Kleefeld, possibly of a heart attack

Fast, Wilhelm

Born 18 August 1894 in Sergyevka, Fuerstenland

Married **Margaretha Giesbrecht**

She was born 16 January 1899 in Schoenhorst, Chortitza, parents Abraham H Giesbrecht and Helena Bergen

Children:

1. **Heinrich** - born 20 November 1922 in Katerinovka

2. **Peter** - born 29 August in Tokmak, Taurida

Giesbrecht, Gerhard George

Born 1878 in Ruekenau, Molotschna

Second wife **Cornelia Harder** was born 14 December 1899 in Sparrau, Molotschna

The family first lived in the Wernersdorf, Molotschna, then via Moscow migrated to Canada in 1924

Children:

1. **Lydia** - born 14 November 1920 in Tokmak, Taurida, married William Earl Hewson, 3 children

2. Tamara - born 19 May 1922 in Wernersdorf

3. Nina - born 11 March 1924 in Moscow, likely as the family was in transit to Canada

4. George Gerhard - born 28 September 1925 in German Mills, Ontario, married, 2 children

Father Gerhard died 10 January 1926 in Kitchener, Ontario

Wife Cornelia died 24 June 1998 in Kitchener, Ontario

Goossen, Mr

Mrs Goossen

Daughter **Anna** was born 1 February 1925 in Tokmak

Anna migrated to Canada, not sure when

Anna married Johannes Klassen 28 January 1950 in Waterloo, Ontario, 4 children

Anna died 14 September 1963 in Leamington, Ontario

Harder, Peter

Born 15 June 1868 in Halbstadt, Molotschna

Married **Helena Epp** 31 May 1892

She was born 20 July 1871 in Novo Podolsk, *Judenplan*, parents Dietrich Epp and Maria Unger

If the birth records are accurate they moved around to various villages

Children:

1. **Alexander** - born 19 March 1893 in Sagradovka Colony
2. **Bernhard** - born 14 November 1894 in Gnadental, Schlachtin Colony
3. **Helena** - born 28 September 1896 in Gnadental, Schlachtin Colony
married Dietrich Rempel, lived in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna, 4 children
4. Anna - born 7 November 1898, in Gnadenfeld, Sagradovka, died 12 June 1899
in Gnadenfeld
5. **Anna** - born 5 April 1900 in Gnadental, Schlachtin
6. **Maria** - born 27 February 1902 in Neu-Schoensee, Sagradovka, married Jacob Penner,
lived in Vyazemskoye, Arkadak Colony, 4 children
7. **Katharina** - born 11 June 1904 in Neu-Schoensee, died 11 September 1905 in
Neu-Schoensee
8. **Luisa** - born 6 April 1907 in Tokmak, Taurida, married Gerhard Epp, 4 children
9. **Ella** - born 26 March 1909 in Tokmak, Taurida

Mother Helena died 1919, Peter died 15 September 1923

Heese, Peter

Member of the Mennonite congregation in Tokmak

Hiebert, Bernhard

Born 1898

Married **Anna Ratzlaff** who was born 23 October 1898 in South Russia

Children:

1. **Irma** - born 15 April 1918, married Mr Holz, 4 children
2. **Anna** - born 5 April 1926 in Tokmak, Taurida, married Jacob Scharton 15 December
1949 in Karaganda, Kazakhstan, lived in Karaganda, 6 children
3. **David** - born 12 June 1927 in South Russia, married Lili Ristow, 4 children,
also seem to have lived in Karaganda

Krause, Friedrich Robert

Born 24 August 1865 in Neuendorf Gross Werder, Prussia

He was a German Lutheran

Married **Katharina Schritt** 6 December 1888 in Prischib, near the Molotschna Colony

Lived first in Neu-Halbstadt/Tokmak, then Ohrloff, then Altona

Children:

1. **Friedrich** - born 14 September 1889 in Neu-Halbstadt, Molotschna
2. **Johann** - born 17 December 1891 in Tokmak, Taurida, married Florentina Andreas

- 17 June 1917 in Orenburg, moved to Germany in 1918, 3 children, he died
31 August 1923 in Elbing, Prussia
3. Justine - born 19 August 1893 in Ohrloff, Molotschna, married Abraham Huebert in 1917, eventually she was banished
 4. Wilhelmina - born 25 July 1895 in Ohrloff, Molotschna, married Jacob Isaak in 1921
 5. Wilhelm - born 30 March 1897 in Ohrloff, Molotschna, married Gertruda Neufeld in 1922, moved to Germany in 1938
 6. Pauline - born 5 December 1898 in Ohrloff, Molotschna, married Heinrich Dargel in 1920
 7. Friedrich - born 29 October 1900, moved to Germany in 1930
 8. Heinrich - born 2 January 1903 in Ohrloff, Molotschna, married Margarot Bartels in Germany in 1933
 9. Emilie - born 29 March 1905 in Altona, Molotschna, married Kornelius Janzen in 1927, she died 1936 in Russia
 10. Bertha - born 31 July 1908 in Altona, Molotschna, married Heinrich Janzen in 1928, she was banished

Lenzmann, Hermann August

Born 19 December 1847 in Gnadenfeld

Son of Elder August Lenzmann

Outstanding educator, and then printer

Secondary education under Heinrich Franz, whose daughter **Helena** he married

2 children, both born in Gnadenfeld

Taught elementary school in Berdyansk

Theological Seminary in Barmen, Germany 1868-1872; Teacher Training in Neuwied

1873-1881 (except 1875) taught at Gnadenfeld *Zentralschule*

1875 studied at University of Tuebingen

1881-1898 taught at Halbstadt *Zentralschule*, then 1898-1907 back to Gnadenfeld

Opened up a print shop in Tokmak probably by 1903

Printed a number of books/pamphlets 1904-1907; one of the better known is *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch* (1903-1907). Most often Hermann Lenzmann was listed as printer and publisher. In the 1903 volume he wrote two brief articles.

In 1910 was one of the four known Mennonite print establishments in Russia

Hermann Lenzmann, and brother **Wilhelm Lenzmann**, both grandsons of his, remember making deliveries for the print shop in 1918. No record of its existence in 1919

He died late 1924 in Neu-Halbstadt, where he lived

In his last years he was bitter and withdrawn, estranged from the church

Penner, Franz

Married **Eva Goertz**

She was born 8 December 1817, parents Peter Goertz and Sara Brandt

Daughter **Maria** - born December 1850 in Tokmak, Taurida, married David Schmidt

4 June 1871 in Alexanderwohl, at least 1 son

David, born 20 February 1872, died 28 May 1872

Maria died 28 February 1872, likely complications of childbirth

Perk, P

Opening of a bookstore in Tokmak by P Perk was announced in the *Friedensstimme* of 17 February 1907

This was done in cooperation with H J Braun store of Halbstadt

Intent was to provide an evangelical witness by providing Christian books in both Russian and English

To help supplement the income, Perk was also going to be an agent for household machines such as washing machines, wringer washers and separators as well as seeds

Perk previously established an evangelical church in Samara

He was not a preacher, but conducted a choir, worked in a Sunday School and gave private instruction

Peters, Sara

Said to have been born in Gross Tokmak

Foster daughter of Jakob Dirksen of Lichtenau

Married Peter Boese 17 April 1869, 3 children, she died 1910

Reimer, Jakob David

1817-1891

Lived in Felsenthal Estate

One of the founders of the Mennonite Brethren Church

Together with Johann Claassen and others, involved in an attempt to establish an *Armenschule* in Tokmak. It failed in 1861 due to lack of qualified teachers, lack of funding, and lack of interest

Sawatzky, Mr**Sawatzky, Mrs**

Daughter **Irmgard** - born 26 March 1935 in Tokmak, Taurida, married Gerhard Kliever on 19 January 1958 in Karaganda, Kazakhstan, lived in Karaganda, 3 children

Sommerfeld, Heinrich

Born about 1816

Married **Margaretha Esau** about 1835; she was born 1818

First lived in Alexanderwohl, Molotschna, then by 1841 in Tokmak, by 1853 back in Alexanderwohl, by 1857 in Landskrone

Children:

1. **Margaretha** - born 1836 in Alexanderwohl
2. **Katharina** - born 6 January 1838 in Alexanderwohl, married Jakob Warkentin 8 December 1857, lived in Altona, Molotschna, 11 children, the last of whom was born in Kansas in 1882, she died 3 July 1903 in Marion County, Kansas
3. **Maria** - born 29 January 1841 in Tokmak, married Jakob Enns 9 February 1865, lived in Berdyansk, 8 children, the last 3 born in Kansas, she died 27 September 1920 in Canton, Kansas
4. **Susanna** - born 27 August 1844 in Tokmak, married Aron Warkentin, then Johann Epp, 2 Warkentin children, 2 Epp children, migrated to USA, where Susanna died 18 July 1879 in Marion County, Kansas
5. **Heinrich** - born 1 October 1846 in Tokmak, married Anna Schroeder 20 May 1870,

likely lived in Alexanderwohl, 12 children, the last 9 born in Goessel, Kansas,
Migrated to USA aboard the S S Cimbria, landing in New York 27 August 1874
He died 15 September 1921

6. Helena - born 4 January 1853 in Alexanderwohl, Molotschna, married David Goertz,
then Abraham A Regier, died 1 October 1931

7. Leonhard - born 6 September 1857 in Landskrone, Molotschna, married Katharina
Warkentin, 6 children, migrated to Kansas in 1884, died in California

8. Jakob - born 1859

9. Aganetha - born about 1862, married David Schmidt, then Heinrich J Schroeder,
5 Schmidt children, all born in Kansas, she died 31 January 1943, in Kansas

Mother Margaretha died 6 January 1880, in Russia

Father Heinrich died 25 January 1887 in Marion County, Kansas

Sudermann, Hermann

Born 21 September 1825 in Kalthof near Koenigsberg, Prussia

Migrated to the Molotschna Colony in 1839

Married **Elisabeth Ediger** 24 April 1862

She was born in Schoensee, Molotschna

First child **Abraham** was born 24 January 1863 in Tokmak, Taurida, family lived there only
temporarily, or was travelling through

The subsequent 4 children were born in Gnadenfeld: Elisabeth, Elisabeth, Maria, Anna

Next 2 children were born in Berdyansk: Sara, Hermann

Then the family migrated to the USA

Mother Elisabeth died 12 January 1898, and father Hermann died 24 February 1899, both
in Newton, Kansas

Tiessen, Heinrich Bernard

Son of a farmer in Ladekopp

At times helped the Tokmak agricultural machinery factories to test their equipment on the
immediately-adjacent Tiessen farmland

Voth, Heinrich

Elder, formerly from Sagradovka

Died in Tokmak in 1974 at the age of 80 years

Wall, Gerhard P

Wife Maria Goossen

She was the sister of Jakob Johann Goossen, one of the owners of Wintergruen Estate

Born 1844, parents Johann Johann Goossen and Katharina Janzen

Likely died 1917 (some sources say 1923)

Gerhard owned a steam-powered flour mill in Tokmak

Went on a trip to America in 1905 or 1906, to visit another of his wife's brothers, Johann
Goossen

Johann Goossen also visited his sister in Tokmak in July of 1907

Gerhard was one of the investors/owners of the Tokmak Railway

Mill building still standing in Tokmak in 2004 is thought to be that of Gerhard Wall

It is possible that Gerhard and Jakob were brothers, and the mill described is the

same one. At this point there are traces of only one mill in Tokmak. The map of Henry B Tiessen for 1915 has only one mill

Wall, Jakob

Owner of a steam-powered mill in Tokmak

In 1908 valued at 50,000R according to the *Forstei* Taxation List

Pictures of him in front of his mill with the employees, and pictures of his elaborate home in Tokmak are also labeled Jakob Wall

Wiebe, Franz

Elder of the Mennonite congregation in Tokmak

Wiens, Johann Peter

Born 17 October 1872 in Ladekopp, Molotschna

Married **Helena Fast** 1 March 1898 in Ladekopp

She was born 6 March 1875 in Herzenberg, Ekaterinoslav, parents Johann Fast and Aganetha Dueck

The family first lived in Ladekopp, then by 1900 in Tokmak, but by 1909 in Omsk

Children:

1. **Helena** - born 12 February 1899 in Ladekopp, married Johann J Wiens, at first lived in Novo Pokrova, Kazakhstan, where the first 3 children were born, migrated to Canada by 1926, where the remaining 5 children were born, she died 4 January 1984 in Morden, Manitoba
2. **Johann** - born 15 September 1900 in Tokmak, Taurida, disappeared in 1919 during the Civil War
3. **Justina** - born 28 May 1902 in Tokmak, Taurida, died 4 February 1958 in Yarrow, BC
4. **Maria** - born 15 January 1904 in Tokmak, Taurida, married Franz G Neufeld 26 June 1932 in Winnipeg, 2 children, Ruth and Helmut, died 10 April 1995 in Winnipeg, Manitoba
5. Agnes - born 16 October 1907 in Minusinsk, Russia, married Franz F Peters in Winnipeg, Manitoba, 4 children, Franz died, she married Johann Guenther, she died 2 March 1997 in Abbotsford, BC
6. Katharina - born 31 August 1909 in Omsk, Siberia, married Johann K Fast 25 April 1935 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, 3 children, died 6 July 1995 in Winnipeg

MENNONITE INSTITUTIONS

Armenschule

Established in Tokmak by Jakob Reimer, Johann Claassen and others after the plans for the *Armenschule* in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna did not materialize
Was intended for German settlers, almost exclusively Lutherans and Catholics
But in 1861 it was closed down due to lack of qualified teachers, lack of funds and lack of interest

Mennonite Church

Begun possibly in the late 1960s
Pictures of the church were given to Gerhard Lohrenz on 3 February 1974, likely by a member
Elder was Franz Wiebe, a member was Peter Heese



Mennonite Church in Tokmak, labelled
“Our church”



Rear of Mennonite church with Elder Franz Wiebe
and member Peter Heese, 3 February 1974

MENNONITE BUSINESSES

Braun, Heinrich

The principal print shop and bookstore of Raduga Publications was in Neu-Halbstadt, valued at 38,000R by the *Forstei* Taxation List of 1908
They also had a bookstore in Tokmak in 1908, valued at 6,000R

Dick, Jakob and Isaak

Owners of a steam-powered flour mill valued at 10,000R according to the *Forstei* Taxation List of 1908
They lived in Tokmak, but exact location of the mill is not given, possibly was Tokmak

Lenzmann Printer and Publisher

Print shop in Tokmak owned by Hermann August Lenzmann
Printed *Predigt ueber Taufe, Abendmal* in 1904
Printed *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Forsteidienstes der Mennoniten in Russland* by Elder Abraham Goerz in 1907. A copy of this pamphlet is in the John A Toews Historical Library in Winnipeg.
Printed, in some years was publisher, and in a number of issues Lenzmann wrote articles for the *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch* (1903-1907)
In the *Forstei* Taxation List of 1908 the business was evaluated at 3,000R
In 1910 P M Friesen was aware of only four printing establishments among the Mennonites in Russia: Raduga, Halbstadt, begun by Peter Neufeld
H A Ediger in Berdyansk
A P Friesen in Dawlekanovo
Hermann A Lenzmann in Tokmak
Seems to have been functioning as early as 1903, in which case Hermann Lenzmann would have been teaching in Gnadenfeld, and running the print shop as well from 1903-1907
Grandsons of owner, Hermann and Wilhelm Lenzmann remember making deliveries for the print shop as late as 1918. No record of activity has been found for 1919
Therefore the business seems to have functioned 1903 to 1918

Wall, Gerhard

Owned a steam-powered flour mill
Went on a trip to America in 1905 or 1906
One of the investors/owners of the Tokmak Railway, shown on the published picture of the group
Mill building still standing in Tokmak in 2004 is thought to be that of Gerhard Wall

Wall, Jakob

Owned a steam-powered mill
In 1908 valued at 50,000R according to the *Forstei* Taxation List

Pictures of him in front of his mill with the employees, and pictures of his elaborate home are also labelled Jakob Wall

The mill seems to have been under the jurisdiction of the Gnadenfeld Volost, so Jakob likely came from there

Perk, P

Opening of a bookstore in Tokmak by P Perk was announced in the *Friedensstimme* of 17 February 1907

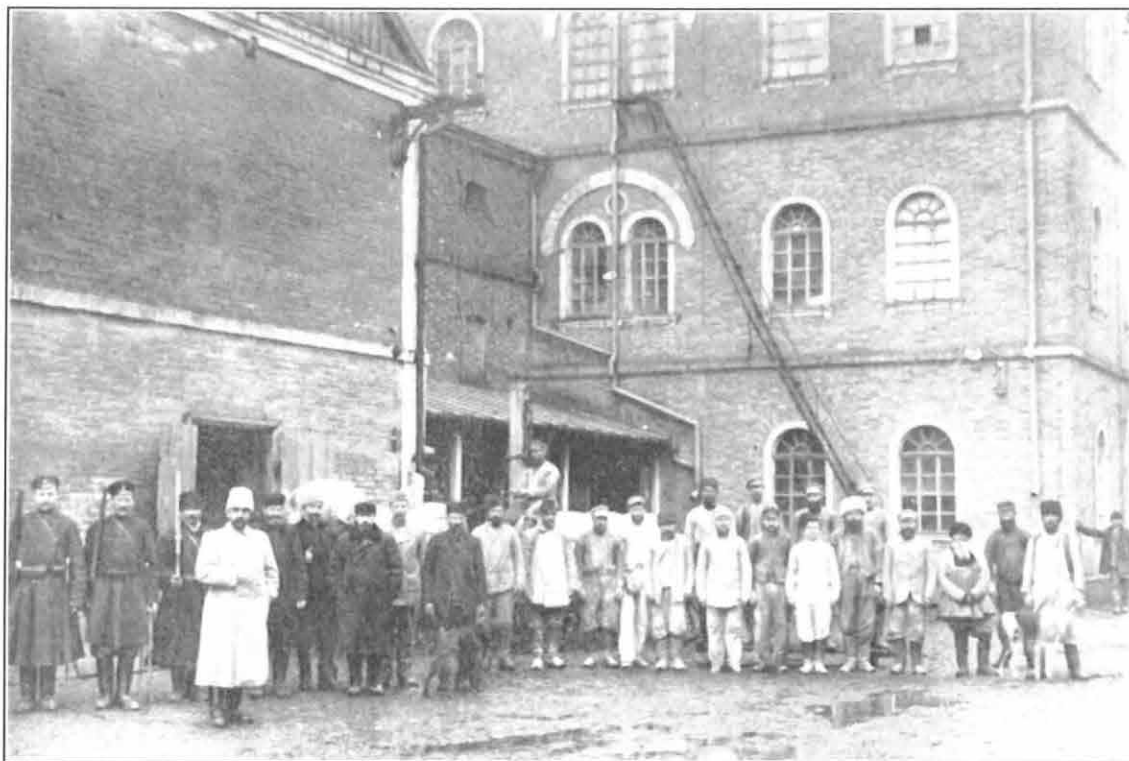
This was done in cooperation with the H J Braun store in Halbstadt

Intent was to provide an evangelical witness by providing Christian books in both Russian and German

To help supplement the income, Perk was also going to be an agent for household machines such as washing machines, wringer washers and separators as well as providing seeds



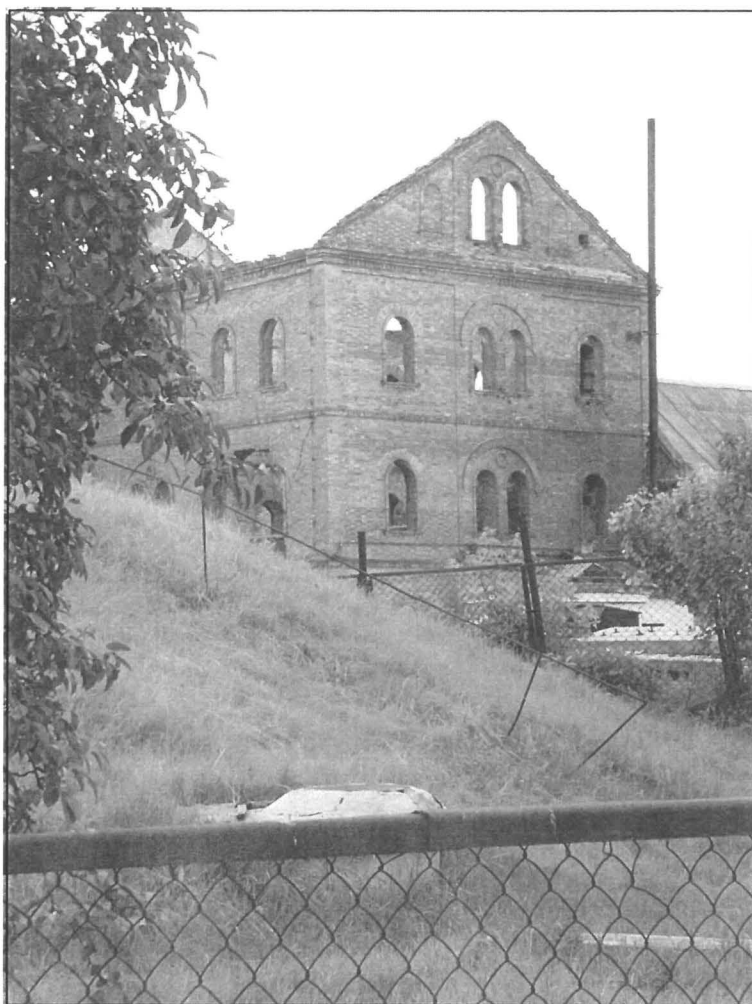
Mill owner Gerhard Wall and his wife Maria, with her brother Johann Goossen of Henderson, Nebraska, who came for a visit in July of 1907



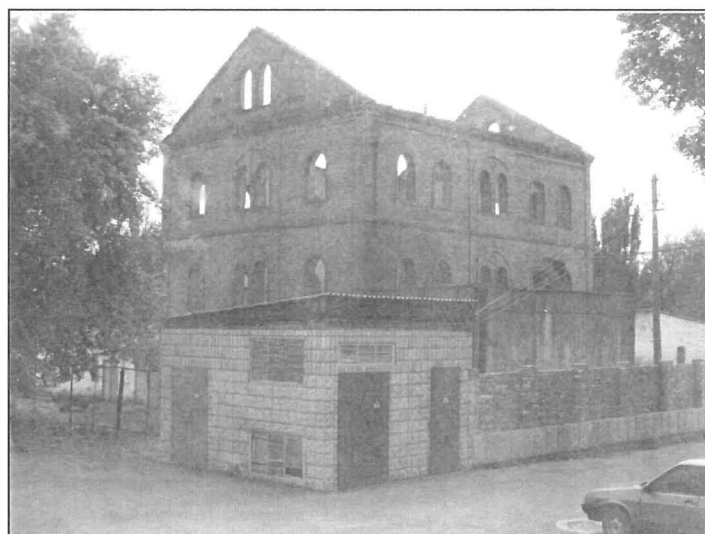
Jakob Wall mill and employees, Jakob in light coat on the left



Mill owner Jakob Wall on his yard in Tokmak



The steam-powered flour mill in Tokmak owned by Gerhard Wall. Picture by Peter Letkemann in 2004



The steam-powered flour mill in Tokmak owned by Gerhard Wall. Picture by Peter Letkemann in 2004

THE TOKMAK RAILWAY COMPANY SOCIETY

A company, headed by brothers Gerhard and Johann Wall, financed mostly by Mennonites, planned to build a railway through the Molotschna. It was hoped that this railway would benefit both industrial and agricultural development of the colony as well as the town of Tokmak.

A telegram arriving from St Petersburg on 8 June 1910, informed the brothers Wall that the project had been accepted by the appropriate government commission. An organizational meeting of the shareholders of the Tokmak Railway was held in Berdyansk 21 June 1911. Elected onto the executive were W W Fomin, Jakob P Wall, Johann P Wall, and P A Ediger, all of Berdyansk. W W Fomin was elected president, Jakob P Wall vice-president. That same day the first meeting of the executive was held. Mennonite investors in the railway included H Ediger, P Ediger, H Janzen, Jakob P Wall and Johann P Wall, all of Berdyansk. Total investment capital was 1,750,000 rubles. It was felt that if the summer holiday season did not interfere with obtaining the necessary documentation from St Petersburg, work on the railway could begin in the autumn of 1911.

The railway ran from the Station Zarekonstantinovka on the Mariupol line westward through the northern part of the Molotschna to Tokmak and Halbstadt, then along the line of villages southwest to Lichtenau. It crossed the Molochnaya River via the Molotschna *Bruecke* (bridge) to reach Station Feodorovka on the southern line. Work proceeded rapidly, with track being laid first on the eastern end. When sections were completed, trains brought in supplies for the remaining sections.

Construction of the rail bed required a considerable amount of sand, so when a ten-dessiatine section of land which had excellent sand was discovered near Landskrone, a spur line was built to reach it. The upper layer of earth was taken away by workers with one-horse wagons, then a huge dredge picked up the sand in large buckets and poured it into waiting railway cars. Because of this spectacle Landskrone became a minor tourist attraction; school groups would go on outings to watch the machines in action. When the project was finished the tracks of the spur line were removed, and the dredge was sent back to Germany.

A general meeting of most members of the Tokmak Railway Company Society was held on 7 February 1912. Good progress was being made in construction. A telephone line along the entire track, also to Berdyansk, was to be completed by 1 April. Putting down railway ties and track was to begin on 1 July. Henry Tiessen, a young lad living in Ladekopp, remembers that he and his parents helped the surveyors mark off the land where the track was to be laid. There was a deep gully near Ladekopp which the railway had to cross, requiring a bridge about 80 feet high.

Work progressed well, and by July, 1913, rails had been laid up to the station in Lichtenau. Trains passed Halbstadt up to five times a day with supplies. One sour note during construction was a strike by 15 workers in Halbstadt. They demanded that even those who wanted to work should join them in the strike. The strikers were arrested and taken to Tokmak.

The eventual total cost of building the railway was thought to be 50,000 to 60,000 rubles per verst. A locomotive repair shop with a roundhouse was built in Tokmak.

Construction was completed and trains began their scheduled runs on 20 December 1913, with two daily runs in each direction. Train No. 4, heading east, took a total of 11 hours 20 minutes to complete its run. The section between Lichtenau and Stulnevo, with stops at Neu-Halbstadt and

Tokmak, took three hours and 50 minutes.

The railway, like all new ventures, had its good and bad moments. A correspondent waxed eloquent about the beautiful vista to be seen from the Molotschna *Bruecke*, including the row of villages visible both to the right and to the left. Those living close to the station in Halbstadt considered their proximity to be a mixed blessing, since they received many house guests. It was noted, perhaps with a hint of resignation, that, "Itinerant preachers are often guests, but it must be remembered that they are not paid much, and have families to support."

An accident was reported about a month after the train service began. A Russian farmer, perhaps slightly under the influence of alcohol, was going to pick up his wife from the hospital in Ohrloff. As he tried to cross the railway embankment a runner of his sleigh caught in the track. Before he could get off the track his team was hit by a locomotive. One horse was killed, the other injured. The farmer survived, the locomotive was derailed and 15 fathoms of track was damaged. Service was disrupted for one day and two nights before the track was repaired.

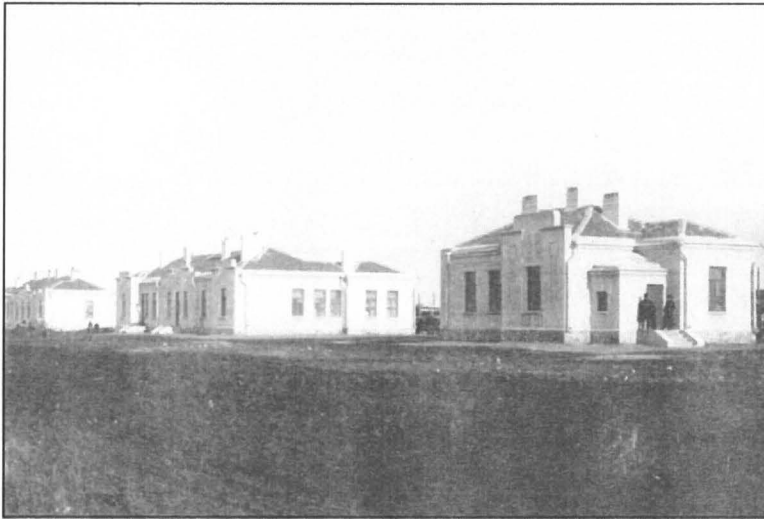
Original fears, expressed by Johann Willms of Hierschau, were that with easier access, bandits and other undesirables could more easily come into the area, a concern which was certainly borne out by subsequent events. During the Civil War both Red and White armies had armoured trains, which included cannons mounted on railway cars. In the summer of 1920, when the Red Army controlled the region, armoured trains patrolled the Tokmak tracks. The villages still occupied by the opposing White Army were bombarded; any sign of smoke from a chimney would send shells arching across the countryside. One shell reached Hierschau, 6 verst from the track, exploding on the edge of the Sperling *Kleinwirtschaft*, wounding all five members of the family, some seriously. Waldheim was also shelled in July 1920, and Peter Toews, teacher, and his wife Aganetha were killed when a shell landed right in front of them.

Later in the 1920s the railway was the common mode of travel for emigration from the Molotschna to Canada. With large groups of travellers leaving at one time, the long line of train cars, the traffic jams of wagons, the piles of baggage, and the sad farewells were undoubtedly etched on the minds of many people. The most frequently-used station was at Lichtenau.

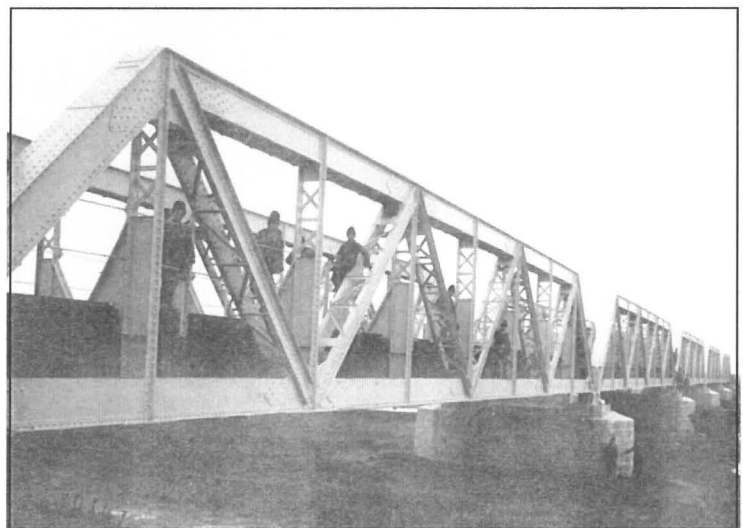
A similar, though less voluntary exodus occurred in the autumn of 1941. The German invasion of the Soviet Union began 22 June 1941, and with rapidly advancing German armies the Soviet policy was to move as many people as possible further east. Most of the Molotschna population was taken to Lichtenau, Halbstadt/Tokmak and Stulnevo on the Tokmak Railway in the first days of October. The Soviets were able to evacuate all those from Lichtenau, sending them either to Kazakhstan or the far north. The trains carrying them went through the northern Molotschna, with people waving as they passed their friends and relatives waiting at the other stations. The 10,000 at Halbstadt/Tokmak and the 7,000 at Stulnevo were more fortunate; when the German/Rumanian armies occupied the region the people were able to return to their homes.



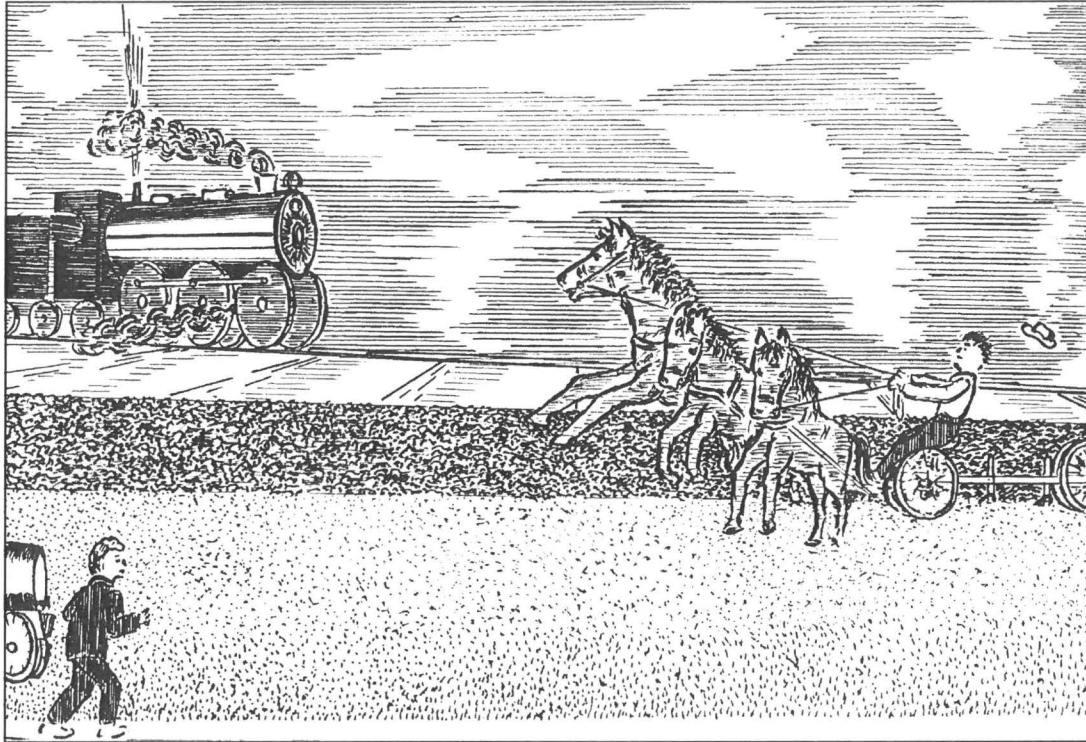
Builders and shareholders of the Tokmak Railway. Middle row second from l: G Wall, mill owner in Tokmak, third from l: estate owner Jakob Wall, last on the l: estate owner Johann Wall. Two industrialists from Tokmak in the back row, Fuchs and Kleiner



Tokmak Railway station under construction



Tokmak Railway bridge under construction



Henry B Tiessen wrote, “ When the trains began to roll across our fields, the horses were not used to it.” His illustration shows a highly stylized locomotive. Strangely there are photographs of the track, the bridges and the stations, but none of the actual locomotives which pulled the trains!



Departure of a 1924 group of Mennonites from the Lichtenau Station of the Tokmak Railway

THE FLOOD OF 1912

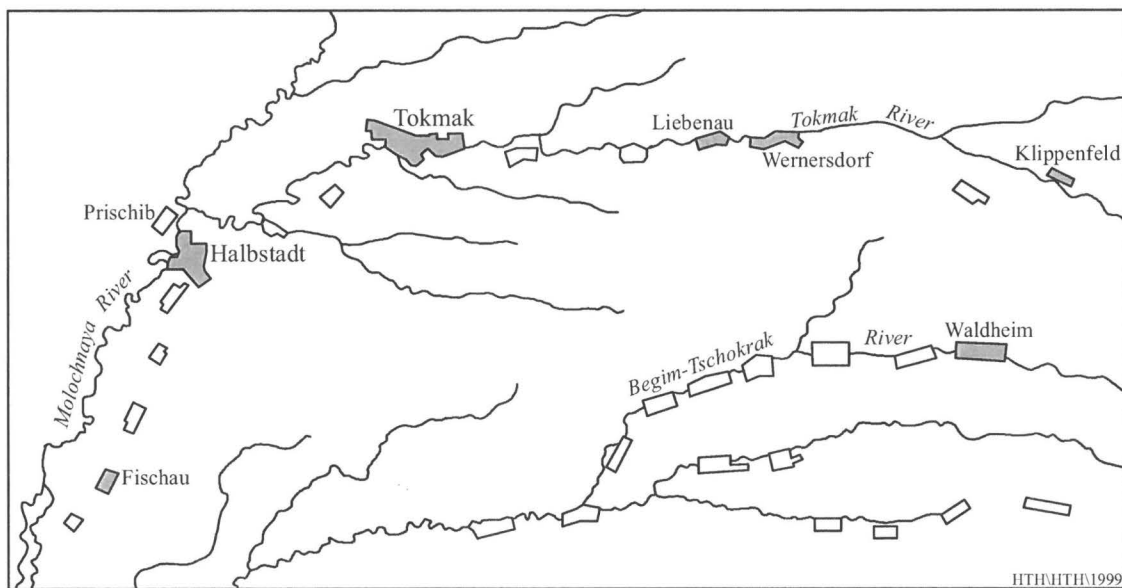
There had been floods in the Tokmak/Halbstadt region of the Molotschna Colony and surrounding areas on a number of occasions, notably 1893 and 1909, but the flood of 1912 was the worst in living memory. The winter of 1911-1912 was relatively mild, with very changeable weather. There were four heavy snowfalls followed by warm temperatures and considerable melting. Because of the variation in temperature the ground became frozen; with a sudden melt the water could not soak into the ground, but had to run off.

There was heavy snowfall for several weeks, then warm temperatures on 24-26 February 1912. This caused rapid melting and widespread flooding of the Molotshnaya River and its tributaries, especially the Tokmak and the Begim-Tschokrak Rivers.

Flooding was recorded well up the Tokmak River at Klippenfeld, with low lying gardens inundated. In Liebenau the situation was much worse, possibly due to ice jams. The water rose rapidly, giving a fast flowing stream down the village street.

Farther downstream flooding and subsequent damage was very severe in the town of Tokmak. A large wooden bridge was destroyed by the ice and pushed against a more sturdy stone bridge. About 200 houses were flooded and collapsed, with considerable damage to many more. The police asked a Jewish couple to evacuate their home, but the husband was afraid to move his very ill wife. The cool air might hurt her. When water poured into the windows it was difficult to reach the house, and by the time the rescuers arrived, the lady had died.

The flood waters swept on to Halbstadt, where there was fairly deep water on the streets. Many basements were flooded, and at least one house collapsed.



Northwestern Molotschna and Tokmak, showing towns and villages mentioned in the reports of 1912

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INDEX OF ALL PEOPLE LISTED AS LIVING IN THE CITIES OF IMPERIAL RUSSIA

Unless specifically mentioned, spouses are not listed. When a child is listed as being born it is assumed that there must have been a father and a mother living in the city. Married women are listed under their maiden name, followed by their married name in brackets. If their maiden name is not known, women are listed under their married name. If the given names of people are not known, they are listed as Mr, Mrs, Son, Daughter, Children etc. When the term "Children" is used we have assumed that this means at least 2 children for statistical purposes. Where names are identical, the order in the index follows the order in which they occur in the text. In alphabetizing we have not considered the second name of the person, nor the married name. Some people have multiple entries because they lived in more than one city.

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WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

LINEAR MEASUREMENTS

1 vershok	1/16 arshin	1.7 inches	4.4 cm
1 arshin	16 vershok	28.0 inches	71.12 cm
1 sazhen (faden or fathom)	3 arshin	7.0 feet	213.36 cm
1 verst	500 sazhen (fathoms)	.663 miles (3,500 feet)	1.0668 km

LAND AREA

1 dessiatine	2,400 square sazhen or fathoms	2.7 acres	1.0925 hectares
1 morgen (Prussian)	.234 dessiatines	.631 acres	.255 hectares

WEIGHTS

1 zolotnik	1/96 funt	.33 oz	4.26 grams
1 funt (Russian pound)	96 zolotnik	12.0 oz	409.5 grams
1 pud (pood)	40 funts	36.11 lbs	16.38 kgs

DRY MEASURES (mostly grains)

1 chetverik	1/8 chetvert	.75 bushels (U.S.) .73 bushels (Imperial)	26.24 litres
1 chetvert	8 chetverik 8 puds	5.96 bushels (U.S.) 5.77 bushels (Imperial)	209.92 litres
1 fuder	1 ladder wagon full		

MONETARY

1 ruble	100 kopeks	value in Canadian and U.S. currency has varied from time to time
The silver ruble was often worth considerably more than the paper ruble		

Specific values of weights and measures used in Russia have varied from time to time. Some were eventually standardized by imperial decree, and thereafter remained unchanged. The values quoted in this table are those which were, according to our best information, in common use in Russia during the time the Mennonites lived there. In 1918 all weights and measurements in the Soviet Union were changed to the metric system.

Table taken from *Hierschau: An Example of Russian Mennonite Life*

CZARS (TSARS) OF RUSSIA

DURING THE MENNONITE PERIOD

Catherine II (The Great)	1762-1796	Conquered the Crimea and opened southern Russia for settlement. First invited the Mennonites to Russia
Paul I	1796-1801	Confirmed Mennonite privileges
Alexander I	1801-1825	Allied with, then fought against Napoleon
Nicholas I	1825-1855	Autocratic, police state, but some economic reforms
Alexander II	1855-1881	Introduced many reforms. Start of Russification of minorities, including Mennonites. Assassinated
Alexander III	1881-1894	More authoritarian, although industry did well
Nicholas II	1894-1917	Politically weak and unreliable. Shot with most of family in 1918

RUSSO-TURKISH WARS

In general these wars could be characterized by a gradual weakening and territorial loss by the Turkish Empire. Russia's ambitions were to gain more territory in southern Ukraine and around the Black Sea, to become the dominant power in the Balkans, to gain access first to the Black Sea, then to the Mediterranean Sea. Peter the Great (1682-1725) forced the Turks out of most of what now is Ukraine.

1736-1739	In wars during the eighteenth century Russia and Austria were allies against the Turks. Catherine the Great conquered areas north of the Black Sea and the Crimea and opened southern Russia for settlement
1768-1774	
1787-1792	
1806-1812	Russia gained Bessarabia
1828-1829	Russia gained control of the eastern coast of the Black Sea
1853-1856	Crimean War. Britain and France allied with the Turks. Russia lost dominant position in Balkans and Black Sea
1877-1878	Russia regained some of the losses of the Crimean War
1914-1917	World War I. Russia had hoped to gain Constantinople and the Dardanelles, but did not succeed

DATES AND CALENDARS

No attempt has been made in this index to differentiate or correct dates as to the Julian (Old Style) or Gregorian (New Style) calendars.

The Julian Calendar was in common use in Europe after it was authorized by Julius Caesar in 46 BC, but increasing discrepancy with the seasons was noted. Pope Gregory XIII announced that the day after 4 October 1582 was to become 15 October, thereby correcting the calendar by ten days. To prevent any further deviation it was also decreed that adjustments would be made to the leap years. Centennial years would be ordinary years unless they were divisible by 400; 1600 was therefore a leap year, but 1700, 1800 and 1900 were not. 2000 was a leap year. This corrects as closely as possible for the accepted actual length of the year, being 365.2422 days.

Most western Catholic countries accepted the Gregorian Calendar soon after it was announced, although Protestant states such as Denmark, The Netherlands and northern Germany waited until 1700; Britain came on stream in 1752. Because the Gregorian Calendar had been promulgated by a Roman Catholic pope it was not accepted by the Russian Orthodox Church and therefore not by Russia.

In the calculation of any historical dates, therefore, one has to know both the date and the country in which the event transpired. Initially the discrepancy was ten days; this changed to 11 on 1 March 1700, then 12 on 1 March 1800 and to 13 days after 1 March 1900. There has been no additional discrepancy calculated this century because 2000 was a leap year.

The Julian Calendar was in use in Russia until February, 1918, when the revolutionary government decreed a switch. 1 February became 14 Huebert, H T, *Events and People*, Springfield Publishers, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1999, pp 144-147 February, thereby catching up the 13 days. The Russian Orthodox Church, however, still maintained the Julian Calendar, and to this day (2008) some churches use it.

The early Anabaptists obviously used the Julian Calendar, then increasingly after 1582 were in areas of Europe where the Gregorian Calendar was in vogue. Mennonites in Prussia used the Gregorian (New Style), but then had to switch to the Julian (Old Style) when they moved to Russia. Because of this peculiarity of dates, some Mennonites celebrated Easter in Prussia, then celebrated it again some days later in Russia.

After February, 1918, all official documentation in the Soviet Union was according to the Gregorian Calendar. Some Mennonites accepted this wholeheartedly and even corrected family records to reflect this change. Others, for various reasons, did not. Some maintained old dates, such as birthdays, simply for sentimental reasons. For this index, where primary sources have been used from the czarist times in Russia, presumably dates will be Julian; where primary sources are from after February, 1918, they may be Gregorian.

AUTHOR AND CARTOGRAPHER

Helmut Theodore Huebert is a practicing orthopaedic surgeon in Winnipeg, Canada, now semi-retired. He was born in Bassano, Alberta, but then as a boy moved from place to place during the time his father intermittently taught Bible school and received further education. In 1948 the family settled in Winnipeg, where Huebert obtained his high school education at the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute. He then went on to the University of Manitoba, where he also received most of his post-graduate education. He spent one year in Britain learning more orthopaedics and British history.

While pursuing his chosen profession, Huebert also has a deep commitment to Jesus Christ. This has been expressed by his participation in the local congregation, the Portage Avenue Church, as well as provincial, national and international Mennonite Brethren boards. He has also gone on twenty international medical assignments.

One of Huebert's longstanding interests is history, particularly that of his own heritage, Mennonite history. He attributes some of this interest to his high school Mennonite History teacher, Gerhard Lohrenz. Huebert has published *Hierschau: An example of Russian Mennonite Life* (1986), *Kornelius Martens: Our Skillful Advocate* (1986), *Events and People: Events in Russian Mennonite History and the People that made them Happen* (1999), *Molotschna Historical Atlas* (2003), *Mennonite Estates in Imperial Russia* (2005) as well as *Mennonites in the Cities of Imperial Russia Vol I* (2006). Huebert and William Schroeder have collaborated in the production of the *Mennonite Historical Atlas* (First Edition 1990, Second Edition 1996), which has sold over 6,500 copies.

Helmut and his wife Dorothy have three children: Karen, David and Susan



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